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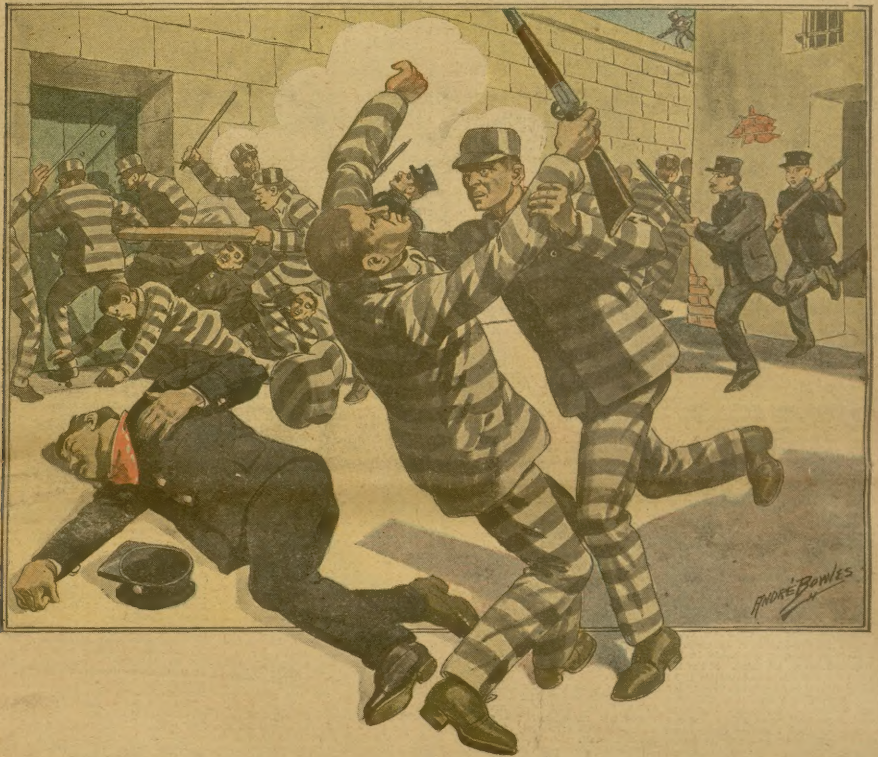
CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XLIV, NO. 3. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, JANUARY 15, 1916. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS



HIS STRANGE REVENGE

By

John Miller Gregory

THE adage, "Still waters run deep," is a bromide, but it describes Jefferson's character pretty thoroly. Jefferson was the silent, timid, self-conscious little secretary of the president of a great corporation which is said to own a certain State.

Hartridge, the district attorney, described Jefferson by the epigram. After the men had clashed, the district attorney, who used to pride himself on being able to read men's souls, found that not even his insight had been keen enough to probe the mysterious, secret pools which lay, deep and quiet, beneath the little secretary's apologetic exterior.

Hartridge had battered his own soul into a lump of steel. He was a young man with a bright future. He had ambition, personality, aggressiveness, and determination, without any of the conscientious scruples that might have held him from the fulfillment of his dreams. These dreams carried him to the Governor's chair, at least, and, maybe, to the United States Senate. His aim was high, but his soul groveled on the ground. He acquired much of the point of view of the criminals whom he sent daily to jail in the course of his duty.

He had become willingly the creature of the corporation, because, in that way, he thought, his ambition could be more quickly realized. Hand in hand with corrupt judges, he worked for his owners, and did his work well. He became cynical, more determined, and more unrelenting, until, finally, he grew to be like the bronze statue of Justice with her eyes bandaged, which stood over the courthouse—a menacing, hardened figure, blind to everything, even to justice and fair play.

Then came Jefferson to spoil it all—Jefferson the silent, timid, self-conscious little secretary with the large family and the small salary, and a soul in whose depths the waters ran still and deep.

One day the corporation overstepped itself, and a meddling grand jury indicted its president and some of its officers. A certain little newspaper which, altho a corporation itself, fought other corporations valiantly and noisily for its circulation's sake, began to scream columns about personal guilt and imprisonment.

Hartridge found himself in a predicament. Of course he had to nolle the indictments against his owners, so he determined, as the easiest way to do it safely, to have Jefferson give false evidence on the witness stand.

But Hartridge had reckoned without Jefferson. The little man, when he was called to the district attorney's office, stood stubbornly against him. There was a stormy scene. Hartridge hammered his desk with a brawny fist, while

Jefferson stood nervously twisting his hat between his hands. Hartridge raged and threatened and cajoled, but Jefferson refused to take his orders.

At the end of the interview, Jefferson went home and told his wife that he was out of a job, and that foolish little woman, strange to say, threw her arms around his neck and laughed and wept on his shoulders, and called him her brave, strong man. But, of course, that hasn't anything to do with the story.

Jefferson testified truthfully on the stand, and because he did so, was indicted himself shortly afterward for perjury.

When Justice demands a victim, it must be given her quickly. Long before the corporation cases came before the court, while they were being shuttled around on motions and other legal delays, Jefferson was brought before the bar.

In a court in which contempt was but little lower in the criminal scale than murder, a kept judge sat upon the trial of an innocent man, who was being jobbed by a kept prosecutor to satisfy the demands of Justice. Jefferson was found guilty, and the court sent him to the penitentiary for as long as it had power to sentence him.

The little man heard the sentence with a slowly whitening face. He seemed dazed at first, and looked oddly at the shaft of sunlight which came thru the tall windows of the courtroom, and fell on the table before him. Once he turned and glanced at his little family, which huddled hopelessly behind him. A tear trickled down his face, but he wiped it away with his dusty sleeve and left a grotesque black mark on his white skin. Then he swallowed once or twice and licked his lips as if they were dry.

Suddenly he asked if he might speak. The judge nodded assent, and Hartridge found himself leaning over his table, while every word that Jefferson said hammered its way into his brain.

"The district attorney knows what he's done to me," Jefferson was saying. "He will never forget it. As he grows older, the memory of it will become keener. The burden will bear on his conscience until his life becomes miserable, no matter how great he may get to be. Eventually it will break him. The burden is on his back. As long as he lives he will remember that he went out of his way to ruin the lives of an innocent man, a woman, and three little children."

That was all. He turned to the waiting deputy sheriff and was led out of the courtroom.

Maybe the scene was a little theatric, especially as Jefferson's wife and children were sobbing out loud as he talked. No one paid much attention to the incident at the time. One or two bright newspaper reporters worked up good stories out of it for their morning papers, and everybody proceeded to forget all about it. That is, everybody but Hartridge.

Somehow the district attorney couldn't get the picture of Jefferson as he stood talking at the table in the courtroom out of his mind. If the little man had been melodramatic; if he had pointed an "accusing finger," or something of that sort, it might have been different. Hartridge began to brood over the matter. He wondered if what Jefferson had said could come true. Could it be possible he would never get Jefferson out of his mind? It seemed absurd.

He tried to throw off his obsession, but, somehow, it refused to leave him. He began to lose flesh and take on an abstract air. After six months, he was so self-centered that he had lost all of his friends. His acquaintances shrugged their shoulders at the sight of him, and said something about his "looking badly" and "needing a rest." None of them knew the real cause of Hartridge's grouch.

But the way that Jefferson's prophecy worked out has yet to be told. Succeeding events showed that when still waters run deep, they may run very, very deep.

Fate, the gambler, played at high stakes with Hartridge and Jefferson, and both men lost their all. Two years after Jefferson went to prison, an absurd but impeachable grand jury was investigating the official acts of the district attorney. The prosecutor fought the case for a year, but finally, gray-haired, bent in body, and broken in spirit like an old man, he followed Jefferson to the narrow cell and barred windows of the State penitentiary. He was sentenced for three years for malfeasance in office.

Hartridge stood in the prison office, as the clerk entered his name in the prison record, and looked thru the window at the world he was leaving temporarily. It seemed twisted and grotesque. In his mind he saw the career he had mapped out for himself —saw it in a heap of tumbled ruins. Bitterness gnawed at his heart. He attributed his fall to Jefferson—Jefferson, the harmless and inoffensive. His downward course seemed, when he reviewed it, to have begun at the end of Jefferson's trial. It was curious, he thought, but Jefferson had been his Nemesis.

They led him away, as they would any other common convict, to be washed and barbered, and clothed in a worn suit of prison stripes, such as the lower grade of prisoners wear, and the newcomers are given, until they prove themselves worthy of the prison gray.

After that, with several hundred men, each with a different number on his breast, he was herded into a big hall, and sat down at a long table between a burly negro and a little, wizened, shaky old man to a meal of beans and bread and water. The food disgusted him, and he pushed it away, but the big negro next to him grinned, and surreptitiously transferred the beans to his own plate.

After a while Hartridge allowed himself to look about. His eyes fell first on a quiet little man who sat at the opposite side of the table. It was Jefferson. This same Jefferson he had seen two years before, standing in a dingy, dusty courtroom in a shaft of sunlight, talking about the burden that would rest on the district attorney's back; the same little retiring, cringing, self-conscious, slightly nervous Jefferson.

He stared, expecting every moment Jefferson would look up and recognize him, but when the little man's eyes finally sought Hartridge's face, they contained only curiosity and a mild sympathy.

At supper the same thing happened, and Hartridge felt convinced that the change in his own appearance had fooled the little man. He felt thankful for that.

That night Hartridge was assigned a cell next to Jefferson's. It was a dark, cold-looking tube with stone walls separating it from similar walls on either side and in the rear. The cell was on the ground floor, and there were two tiers of cells above it.

Inside Hartridge found a bed fastened by hinges to the stone side wall, and a table. The narrow door was of bars of steel, and opened on a bare space about fifteen feet wide, which went entirely around the cell block. On the other side of this space was the prison wall, with its long, narrow, barred windows higher than his head from the floor.

By crowding against the cell door, and looking up thru one of the windows, Hartridge found he could catch a glimpse of the heavens and three or four stars twinkling down at him. Later, he discovered that by standing close against the bars of his door, he could converse with Jefferson in the next cell. In this way, the two men gradually came to know each other.

There was one radical difference between them. Hartridge never mentioned his name, nor the crime for which he was convicted, nor anything about himself.

Jefferson, however, talked of himself continually; of his wife and little children; of his own innocence and the burden on the district's attorney's back. The last seemed to be an obsession with him. He played on the thought from every angle, coming back to it so constantly that Hartridge thought he must be going mad.

Gradually Hartridge became accustomed to the prison routine and began to regain his former strength. With returning health came the old fear of Jefferson's prophecy, and this was made more poignant by the presence of Jefferson himself. His conscience began to torture him. He lay awake at night to shudder helplessly away from the maddening thoughts that came to him. He bought cup upon cup of the scalding mixture which was sold during the night to convicts under the name of coffee, and gulped it down. Then, in a desperate effort for companionship, he began to hang to the bars of his cell door, waiting to have a few words with the guards as they passed in their rubber-heeled shoes on their rounds.

But the day brought him no respite from his tortures. For some reason he was transferred from the bolt shop to the chair factory. He was put to work there at a bench beside Jefferson, and the little man, having acquired the convict's way of talking without moving his lips, muttered continually of his innocence, his wife and little children, and the burden on the district attorney's back.

Hartridge began to grow desperate. In spite of himself he liked Jefferson. He felt nearer to him than to any other person on earth, but the shame of what he had done to the little man, kept him from declaring the truth about himself, and he hated his soul for his cowardice.

He tried to plan some other way to make amends, and as his old aggressiveness came back full force upon him, it turned his mind toward escape. Working together, he thought, he and Jefferson might get away from the prison and start anew. His busy mind began to teem with schemes.

Darnell Prison rests like a castle on a slight hill on the outskirts of a large city in the middle West. The main line of a railroad runs past it on one side, and on the other, a sluggish river winds lazily. Over fifteen hundred convicts are confined within the great walls, some of them the most desperate men of that section of the country.

At dinner one day Hartridge felt a strange suspense in the air. The men around him seemed keyed with but partially suppressed excitement. He noticed that the big negro who sat next to him refused to eat, but sat glancing continually from side to side. The guards who stood on their little raised platforms around the hall, with their rifles resting in the hollow of their arms, seemed to sense something out of the ordinary in the surcharged atmosphere. Their eyes roved anxiously over the silent men beneath them.

With the others, Hartridge rose at the signal and lined up to return to his work in the chair factory. Slowly the long lines moved out of the room, until the last man stepped thru the doors leading to the courtyard. As he passed thru, he turned suddenly and slammed them behind him.

The noise seemed to act as a signal. A line of prisoners broke suddenly and charged upon the guards. A salvo of shouts from husky throats shattered the silence, as the men sprang upon the guards and wrested their guns from them. There was a scattering shot or two and pandemonium broke loose.

Some of the convicts, frightened, rushed to the walls and stood there with their faces turned from the struggling men scattering over the yards. Others, their tense nerves snapping like cords, fell upon benches, and burying their faces in their hands, began to rock to and fro and cry softly. Over the commotion rose the shrill scream of the prison's siren, warning the guards within the walls and the people outside of the uprising of the prisoners.

The guards in the little blockhouses on the walls began a peppering fire into the boiling mob. Men in stripes, their faces twisted in sudden pain, began to crumble into wry heaps as the bullets from the guards' guns stung into their bodies. Inside the bull-pen, thru the barred doors, the warden and his deputies could be seen marshaling other guards.

Hartridge found himself trembling with excitement beside Jefferson, watching the scene, his eyes bright with excitement and the anticipation of immediate freedom. Two huge men, a Berserker rage in their faces, rushed past them bearing a heavy pole, with which they began to batter at the bull-pen doors.

"What is it?" Jefferson gasped.

Hartridge turned on him fiercely.

"It's going to be a jail delivery. Man, it's your chance to get out. Come on!"

With a leap he was in the midst of the fight, his great fists falling on the guards. He seemed to have lost all control of himself. He was in a blind, destructive rage, from which nothing could hold him until it had spent itself. Thru red, he saw freedom beckoning to him, and he was half-crazed to get away from the confining walls, the sleepless nights with his accusing conscience, and the sight of Jefferson's pale, suffering face.

The little man was at his shoulder, pleading, trying to hold him back, begging him to come away, but his words went unheeded.

One of the guards, struck by an iron bolt hurled by a convict, fell at Hartridge's feet, and the former district attorney stooped to pick up the rifle which clattered from the guard's hands. His face was cold and hard when he rose and lifted it to his shoulder.

The next instant Jefferson hurdled on him, wrestling for the gun, pitting his baby strength against the bull-like violence of the larger man. As if from a distance Hartridge heard Jefferson's scream:

"Stop! Stop! You'll go to the chair for this!"

Behind them came a flash and a crack from a guard's gun. Jefferson's face, close to Hartridge's, went white with sudden pain. Hartridge saw and understood. The rifle dropped from his hand as Jefferson threw up his arms and lurched forward drunkenly. Then, slowly, the little man reached out, and with hands clawing for support, slipped down to the ground. Under his left shoulder Hartridge saw a slowly spreading clot of blood, and shut his eyes.

The guards found him bending over the huddled heap in the little pool of blood which was widening on the concrete pavement. They carried Jefferson to the hospital, but when Hartridge pleaded to go along, with shouts and curses he was shoved back to his cell.

Stretched upon his narrow bed, his thoughts rushed down upon him in a maddening chaos of self-hatred. What if Jefferson should die? He would be a murderer, and this torture would be added to his already overwhelming burden. In a frenzy of agony he comprehended that Jefferson was more to him than any other person on earth. The little man had been his consolation and confidant in prison; he was the only one on earth he could call his friend. He broke into scalding tears as the realization rushed over him, and thru the night begged with agonized words some consoling report from the suffering man in the hospital.

For a week, in his little hospital bed, Jefferson fought out his great fight. He seemed determined to live, the chaplin told Hartridge, as if he had something important to do before the end. Each day he asked the chaplain if a message had come for him, and when the priest shook his head, Jefferson would smile and say it would come soon. The days dragged on, and Jefferson fought alone doggedly.

During the long nights in his cell Hartridge was being born anew. Something in his soul had been wrenched, and his tortures became greater than he could bear. Finally he went to the warden and unburdened his soul in a complete written confession.

"Do you know that this may mean another indictment and years added to your sentence?" the warden asked.

Hartridge smiled.

"That's nothing, if I can get away from this damning torture."

He asked and obtained permission to see Jefferson. The little man was getting very weak, or even this might have been denied him.

In the long, narrow room which served as the prison hospital, Hartridge stood beside Jefferson's bed and looked down with misty eyes on the drawn, white face of the man he had so deeply wronged. Jefferson was pressing his hand and smiling weakly at him. Hartridge fell on his knees at the bedside, and great sobs snatched at the words which rushed from him.

With a quick flush on his face, and deep, gasping breaths, Jefferson heard Hartridge's confession. Painfully he lifted himself to his elbow, and a glad light came into his eyes. He realized that his name had been cleared; that his faithful wife could hold up her head again in the secure assurance of his innocence; that his little children could go out into the world proud of their father, who, in spite of stripes, had not been a criminal.

The still waters in Jefferson's soul began to move restlessly for the first time in his silent, timid existence. Elation filled his heart and strengthened his body. His eyes were shining.

(Continued on Page 21.)

LOOK out next week for a great story of love and betrayal, entitled, **SCORCHED GIRL-MOTHS**; or, **CHARMED BY THE PRINCE OF HEARTS.**" Parents as well as girls will find some nuts to crack in the way of problems in this story. See how it turns out. Boys, you will find another of Captain Jack Judson's thrilling stories in next week's Ledger. It will be called, "**CAPTAIN KIDD'S TREASURE**; or, **THE MYSTERY OF SHELTER COVE.**" Don't miss it.

A Movie Detective

:-: Or, :-:

The Press-Agented Gem

By Lloyd Thacher

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Begun in No. 2, January 8. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE Ti Syde, the detective whose methods were so different from others of his calling, was following the fake policeman who had just made a search of the clothing of Grant Grange, Superintendent Bray was not idle.

Not content with having given the newspapers an account of the theft of Miss Hayden's gem, he had also called up the managing editor of the most up-to-date evening paper in the city, and had persuaded that gentlemen that the crime—being the fourth time that this particular jewel had been stolen—deserved the printing of an extra edition. Miss Hayden being so much in the public eye at the moment was deemed sufficient excuse for this unusual action. This accomplished, Bray went home, thoroly satisfied that he had obtained for his company all the publicity possible.

And thus it was that the man of the many disguises, now being followed by Syde, was startled to hear as he alighted from his taxi about half an hour after he had left the picture studio dressed as an officer of the law, a loud-voiced newsboy shouting along the street:

"Robbery of noted motion-picture actress—paper!"

Glancing hurriedly over his shoulder to see if he was observed, the astounded man bought a copy of the paper, and then hurried up the walk leading to a fine mansion set back some distance from the street, surrounded by spacious grounds.

Nor did he take any notice of the vehicle slowly passing the house at the time. It would have interested him had he been able to get a good look at the eyes of the man the car contained. Ti Syde, still leaning back comfortably, had missed no action of the man in blue.

Dusk had gathered, and the stopping of the second car just beyond the corner of the block in which was located the fine mansion which the man in blue had entered, created no comment. And when Syde stepped from it to the walk, no one would have been able to recognize him as the person who had entered it some time previously near the motion-picture studio.

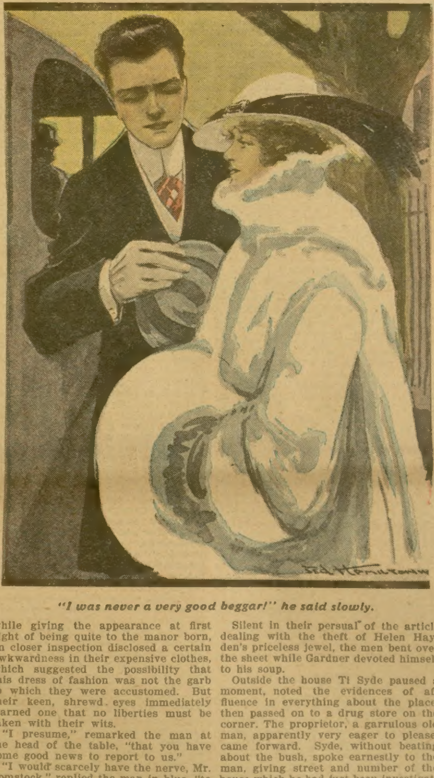
This change of appearance, however, had been accomplished by the aid of no false whiskers or grease paint. A second suit of clothes, taken from beneath the seat of the car, aided materially in the metamorphosis, but the deep lines of the strong face seemed natural ones, and the expression on the face gave no indication of being assumed.

With a word to the chauffeur, Syde walked slowly back in the direction of the house into which he had seen the pretended policeman disappear. Meanwhile that worthy had fitted a key to the door of the mansion, entered quietly, passed down the hall, and into the dining-room at the rear of the house.

"Gentlemen," he said slowly, pausing in the doorway of the handsomely furnished apartment, "I give you greetings. And it would not be out of place if you were to drink to my health."

It was a remarkable gathering that was assembled in the room. At the head of the bountifully laden table sat an elderly man whose high forehead and intelligent eyes betokened great mental powers. He, like the three others at the table, was in evening dress, but it was his personality that seemed to dominate the gathering.

At his right sat a young man whose appearance was the last word in fashion. Even to the narrow shoulders and exceedingly small waist, his get-up was that of the society dandy. A handsome face was marred by the ennui of the eyes, and lines of dissipation told his story more plainly than words could do.



"I was never a very good beggar!" he said slowly.

The other two guests at the table, while giving the appearance at first sight of being quite to the manor born, on closer inspection disclosed a certain awkwardness in their expensive clothes, which suggested the possibility that this dress of fashion was not the garb to which they were accustomed. But their keen, shrewd eyes immediately warned one that no liberties must be taken with their wits.

"I presume," remarked the man at the head of the table, "that you have some good news to report to us."

"I would scarcely have the nerve, Mr. Comstock," replied the man in blue, "to come upon your august assembly in this unceremonious manner if that were not case."

"Welcome, Gardner," smiled back the gentleman addressed as Comstock. "I did not believe that you had been loafing all this time. It is long since you have honored us with your presence."

"Greetings, Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Schuyler," continued the man in blue—Gardner, Mr. Comstock had called him. "I suppose I do not need to ask if I may speak freely. There is no one about?"

Comstock allowed himself the luxury of a dignified laugh.

"Did you ever know things to be carelessly done in this house?" he exclaimed. "And I trust that you will remember that my standing in the community precludes the possibility of any suspicion being attached to any guest of mine. Yes, you may speak freely. But refresh yourself first of all."

At that moment a man servant, faultlessly attired in the suit of a butler, served the newcomer with the first course of the dinner which the others were enjoying, then silently withdrew.

"Perhaps you had better read that," said Gardner, his face showing a trace of anxiety as he tossed the "extra" he had just purchased on the table in front of Comstock.

Silent in their persual of the article dealing with the theft of Helen Hayden's priceless jewel, the men bent over the sheet while Gardner devoted himself to his soup.

Outside the house Ti Syde paused a moment, noted the evidences of affluence in everything about the place, then passed on to a drug store on the corner. The proprietor, a garrulous old man, apparently very eager to please, came forward. Syde, without beating about the bush, spoke earnestly to the man, giving street and number of the house which he had just been investigating casually.

"Can you tell me who lives there?" he asked.

"The biggest man in these parts," replied the old druggist. "Why do you want to know?"

"I come from a charity organization," responded Ti, "and have a subscription list for a worthy cause. The place looks so prosperous that I would like to try my luck with the owner."

"If your cause is a good one," returned the druggist, "he's the man you want to see. He is noted for his good works. Comstock is the name."

"I am indeed grateful to you for your information," said the detective, as he bowed his acknowledgments and passed from the store.

There was no hesitation as he passed up the walk leading to the residence wherein sat four men intensely interested in the newspaper account of the jewel theft. His ring at the bell was answered by the dignified butler who, after showing him into the reception-room, heard Syde's request to talk with Mr. Comstock with the proper impassiveness.

"He is at dinner just now," said the man, "but I have no doubt that he will see you shortly."

The words were no sooner out of his dignified mouth than the man started quickly, hesitated, then fairly darted across the room in the direction of one of the big windows. For from that window had come the sound, not loud, but distinct enough to the two men in the room, of something coming in sharp contact with the glass.

The butler peered out into the dusk, his eyes keen now, searching the street up and down. The shade had not been drawn, and the butler turned quickly to Syde, who showed no apparent interest in the movements of the other.

"Pardon me, sir," said the butler, "but did you hear anything?

"Yes," returned Syde, almost petulantly, "and I thought that I saw a face at the window. But it could have been nothing. Please hurry and deliver my message to Mr. Comstock."

For just a second the butler hesitated, then glided to the front door, opened it, and moved out to the steps looking intently up and down the street.

The second the man had disappeared Syde took three steps toward the curtains which separated the reception-room from the apartment in which the dinner party was in progress, and there stood, his ear as near the gap between the curtains as he dared to place it.

And fortune had favored him—or misfortune, as it seemed to him at that time. For Gardner was speaking to the men who had by this time finished a perusal of the newspaper story of the theft.

"Keep it?" Gardner, the man in blue, was saying. "Do you think I would keep it on my person for a minute? No, it is safe, and no one knows where it is but myself."

The sound of the closing of the front door impelled Syde across the floor once more, and when the butler returned he was looking intently at a beautiful picture on the wall at some distance from the curtains.

"Strange!" muttered the butler. "But I certainly did hear something at that window." His manner was no longer dignified. It was evident to a keen observer such as Ti Syde that he feared he had been remiss in not ascertaining the cause of the noise they had both heard. Perhaps it was that reason—fear of a reprimand from the imperious Comstock—that prompted his next remark.

"If you don't mind, sir," he said, "please do not speak to Mr. Comstock of that noise. He is a very nervous man—has many valuables in his collection of artistic things, and is in constant fear of burglars. It might lose me my place if you were to remark about the noise, and I failed to find out what it was."

"Tut, tut!" rejoined Syde. "I've forgotten all about it. Don't know as I heard anything at all. Just tell him I am here; I am in a bit of a hurry."

The butler left the room much relieved, and Ti crossed to the window from whence had come the sound. From the floor just below the window he picked a small penknife and, smiling, placed it in his pocket.

"Rather a careless butler, I should say," was his whimsical thought, "not to look on the floor. I am glad, however, that his eagerness to do his duty and protect the place made it so easy to distract his attention. So," and the detective's face grew serious, "Mr. Blake, alias a policeman, movie-picture 'extra man,' has not the jewel in his possession. Hum——"

Now Ti could hear the steps of the butler as he entered the dining-room. They were lost immediately as the man reached the heavy rug that covered the floor in the center of the room, leaving a narrow space of hardwood floor which, for the moment, had acted as a sounding board. No spoken words penetrated to the detective in his position, far removed from the barely perceptible opening between the curtains, but he was not kept long waiting as to the manner in which his request had been received.

"Mr. Comstock is extremely sorry, sir," said the butler, entering the reception-room once more, "but he begs me to say that he has guests at dinner and cannot see you. He would be glad to see you some other time. Perhaps tomorrow afternoon."

"Very well," replied Syde, rising. "I shall try to call." He passed from the room and out onto the street. "He seems to be pretty anxious to keep his reputation for philanthrophy," mused the detective. "Perhaps it is well that I did not see him just at this time."

Nevertheless his eyes were almost anxious as he hesitated a moment on the top step of the house and peered thru the gathering darkness up the almost deserted street toward the place where he had last seen the taxi from which the man dressed in the policeman's uniform had alighted. There were no visible signs of the vehicle, and Syde pondered deeply as he descended the steps and walked down toward the street.

"In a safe place," mused the detective. "Very careful person, that man Blake."

He turned up the street still thinking deeply. Suddenly a grim smile came to his face. "He hasn't had much opportunity to find many safe places lately," the detective's thoughts continued. Then came an exclamation as, almost directly in front of him, previously hidden from view by a slight turn in the road, he beheld the taxi in which the man in blue had arrived—the taxi for which he had been looking.

Cautiously he advanced, making no sound, and yet remaining free of the appearance of sneaking up to the vehicle. He gained it and peered cautiously around the corner of the cab at the chauffeur. The man sat humped down, his head forward.

With almost inconceivably gentle movement, Ti Syde pressed close to the door of the taxi. The handle, grasped firmly in his powerful fingers, turned with no sound, and the door, moving an inch at a time, opened easily. How it was possible for so large a man to step inside the conveyance without making a sound, was wonderful, but the feat was accomplished without a move on the part of the sleeping chauffeur, and Ti Syde was sole occupant of the taxi, hidden in the darkness, safe on the soft upholstery.

For some minutes he did not move. The regular breathing of the man at the wheel came to him, and he was glad to note that as yet the driver had neglected to light the lamps. It had been still quite light when he had deposited the man in blue in front of the big house.

After the lapse of a few minutes, when all was quiet on the street, Ti Syde began a series of very peculiar motions. Slowly, but with sure touch, his sensitive fingers crept along the seat which held him.

Occasionally his hand would stop and the fingers would press firmly into the soft upholstery of the cushion. Then on they would glide, until after many minutes every inch of the seat had been thus silently and sightlessly examined.

Next the sides of the cab underwent a similar course of treatment, with like results, and the detective sat back, his wearied fingers regaining their strength, his brain active.

"A temporary hiding-place it must be," came the deciding thought, "and one least to be expected."

After another motionless pause there came to Syde's face the smile that might have been noted there once before that evening. With great caution he felt forward in the little receptacle where the occupant of like vehicles is accustomed to deposit any trivial card or paper with which he happens to be encumbered. The smile of his face broadened as his fingers came in contact with some loose paper, and then, suddenly, he was all seriousness as, just beneath the apparently worthless paper, he touched a small, hard, clean-cut substance.

For just a second the detective did not move. Then: "The old, old story," his lips framed the words. "A thief thinking that the safest place in which to hide anything is the most obvious."

Now he drew from its place the small, hard object over which his fingers had closed. He drew back his hand and fairly curled himself in the corner of the seat. Then from a pocket he took a tiny electric flashlight, shielding the thing from the front with his body. Into the very corner of the cab he moved the hand that held the small object, and with the other pressed the little button that freed the stored-up light of his little lamp.

The clear rays flashed upon the palm of the hand holding the small object, and from it shot gleaming sparkles. No light could be seen from the outside of the cab, and Ti Syde's eyes were fairly glued on the small, hard object he held in the steady glow.

"Yes," he almost whispered, tho no sound come from his lips, "it's Miss Hayden's lost gem!" Long he gazed, his fingers feeling the edges of the thing, his eyes piercing in their scrutiny. Over and over he turned it, and over and over in his brain was repeated one word: "Wonderful! wonderful!"

Then, as tho an instinct unknown to many phlegmatic persons had dominion over him, Ti Syde dropped his finger from the button of the electric searchlight. All was black inside the cab, and his hand reached forward to the receptacle whence he had taken the little object that had so glowed and gleamed in the tiny ray of light but a moment before.

Back in its place beneath the papers fell the small, hard object, and back against the cushions of the seat fell the strong body of the detective, as the door of the cab was pulled violently open, another big form climbed thru, stumbled, then fell heavily upon the recumbent figure of the detective.

In the front seat the chauffeur started violently, as to his ears came the sharp command uttered by the man in the blue uniform whose powerful fingers now circled the throat of Ti Syde:

"Drive on, you fool! Start up! Fast—fast! Go anywhere."

A sudden lurch and the car was in motion, gaining speed with each revolution of the wheels, and as they rushed on, faster and faster, the fingers about the throat of the detective pressed tighter and tighter.

CHAPTER V.

GRANT GRANGE and Helen Hayden stood beside her car in front of the studio in which the exciting events of the last hour had taken place. The man's face expressed an emotion quite the opposite of happiness, while the girl, as she turned to him for a final word, looked anything but attractive.

"No, Grant," she said petulantly, "I have made up my mind to let our friendship go no further. We have to act together, of course, but I shall have to change my mind most decidedly to allow you to come to see me."

There was something of pride in his manner as he answered her.

"I never was a very good beggar," he said slowly, "and I shall not try to form the habit now. But, at least, you might tell me the cause of your sudden change in manner toward me."

She was in the car now, but he held the door open so that she was unable to close it without the assistance of her chauffeur, who sat motionless, apparently oblivious to the low-spoken words.

"I'll tell you—sometime," came her reply. "Please close the door for me."

Apparently too much of a gentleman to make a scene in front of the place where they both worked, Grange closed the door, stepped back, and watched the car glide forward. Nor did he move until it had turned a corner and was out of sight.

Slowly he walked up the street, turned a corner, and passed out toward the open country that stretched flat and low far beyond the outskirts of the city. His head was bowed, and his hands clasped behind his back clutched each other spasmodically.

Meanwhile Helen Hayden, too, was thoughtful. She sat far back in the corner of her car while it sped on southward in the direction of the heart of the great city. They were passing a drug store when she sat forward with an impulsive gesture.

"Stop here, George," she said sharply to her chauffeur.

From the motionless motor she alighted and entered one of the booths with which the store was provided. Giving a number, she held the telephone receiver to her ear with every evidence of impatience over the trifling delay. At last her reply came, she spoke a name, and again waited.

"Yes, Al," she exclaimed presently, "this is Helen. I hoped that you would be at the newspaper office yet—not drunk, as you are so often at this hour."

It was plain that the man at the other end of the wire had a few words to say concerning this needless insult, for the girl's lips did not move for a few seconds while a frown crossed her white brow. It was evident, too, that she was pretty sure of her man, for there was little apology in her next remark.

"Don't think that it is a favor I'm asking of you," she went on, "for it isn't. Crazy I may be, but you know I do like to help you get a big piece of news, and I'll do you the justice to say that no one can handle a big story better than you can—if you've been fairly sober the night before. So I'm going to tell you that if you will be up at the studio where I'm working tomorrow morning about nine o'clock, there will be something doing—something that ought to get big headlines if you write it up as it deserves to be written up. Yes, it's something about the jewel robbery. How do I know that you'll be there?"

Another pause, then: "Yes, come around tonight, late, if you want to, but I'm not going to put you wise to anything."

She hung up the receiver, and for a moment her face relaxed into a decided grin. "If he comes late," she mused, "I guess I can manage to get him to stay straight till after——"

Outside in her car again Helen Hayden, idol of countless "movie fans," settled herself comfortably in her luxurious car, spoke the word "home" to her chauffeur, and was carried quickly over the smooth asphalt to her apartment.

And while the girl who so filled his thoughts was smiling to herself, Grant Grange had been walking dejectedly over the bypaths of near country roads, his head still bent, his thoughts gloomy.

Dusk had begun to gather by the time he retraced his steps, and it was quite dark when he once again reached the smooth walks of the conventional city street. He had eaten nothing since noon, yet he did not notice the lack of food. There was another lack within him that no material food would supply.

Subconsciously his steps took him in the direction of the street on which the studio was located, but he passed it with just the trace of a smile in which there was no merriment. Suddenly, at a corner where a broad avenue bordered by trees began, he stopped, hesitated, and turned into a less pretentious highway, entered the vestibule of an atractive tho modest apartment house, pressed a certain bell, and then moved thoughtfully up the stairs to the second floor.

His ring at the bell of the apartment was almost immediately answered by a girl of about 20 years. Her sweet face, at first inquiring, instantly glowed with pleasure as she recognized Grange, and her exclamation of welcome was eager.

"But I'll be a poor visitor tonight, Madge," said Grant, with a weary smile. "And it's a shame that I come to see you feeling as I do, after staying away for so many weeks."

"The more—the more quiet or blue you feel, Grant," responded the girl, "the more you need your friends. Come in. Mother and I have just finished our dinner. Have you had yours?"

"I don't care for anything," evaded the man, as he passed into the prettily furnished parlor, while Madge took his hat and stick.

"That's nonsense," she returned briskly. Then she left him, and could be heard moving about in the next room. A handsome, middle-aged woman entered, greeted Grange, and added her words to those of her daughter, so that the young man was almost forced to pass into the dining-room, seat himself at the table, and suffer the ministrations of the two graceful friends who seemed so anxious to do for him.

And it was quite a different person who presently pushed his chair back from the table and rose, laughingly protesting that they had certainly incapacitated him for work the next day by the fine dinner they had forced upon him.

"I guess you and Madge are old enough friends to make it quite proper that I leave you alone," said the mother, when they had all returned to the parlor. "I have to go out for a little while."

"And I want to give Grant a good scolding," frowned the girl.

Alone in the homelike room, the man silently smoking, the girl curled up in a great Morris chair, peace seemed to take the place of the uneasiness that had been so apparent on his face ever since he had left Helen Hayden that afternoon. And presently he became conscious of it. He turned and glanced at the girl, whose eyes had never left his face.

"Why is it," he said, smiling, "that just sitting here with you in your home makes me forget the unhappiness of—of things? Why is it, do you suppose, that you and your mother seem to take delight in welcoming me when I'm disgustingly blue and such poor company?"

"Why was it," replied the girl, very gently, "that a certain well-known actor named Grant Grange once noticed a foolish little girl who was trying to get into the pictures, and has done everything in his power to help her get on so that now she sees the possibility of being given good parts and of succeeding?"

"Oh," frowned Grant, "I did nothing. I recognized that you had possibilities, and spoke a good word for you, that is all."

"But it has made the difference between probable success and absolute failure," she responded, looking away from him. "And it has done more than that. It has made that girl feel that if ever the time came when she could do anything for that certain well-known actor named Grant Grange, she would go to any lengths to repay him."

"You're doing it tonight, little Madge," was the man's earnest comment. "Everything looks brighter for me—and for no reason that I can see—since I came here and just had this—this atmosphere about me."

"Perhaps the something to eat had a little to do with it," the girl smiled back at him. "But aren't you going to tell me what is troubling you?"

For a long time there was silence in the room. Several times Grange glanced at her to find her big, understanding eyes fixed on his. Presently, almost as tho he were talking to himself, he spoke.

"I don't know why I'm doing it," he began, "but I guess I've just got to tell some one—some one who will understand. It's just love, Madge—for the first time in my life I'm in love."

The girl did not move—just waited. Little more than a child she seemed as she sat half hidden in the great chair, and it was apparent that he considered her little more than a child, for he went on apparently heedless of the fact that he was talking to a woman who had shown that she cared for him—a woman capable of all the emotions, love, hate, jealousy, which come to a woman's heart.

"Yes, in love," and Grant laughed a little bitterly, "with a girl who seemed to return my affection, but who has—has——"

The girl nodded slowly. "I know—I know," she said softly.

"And I can see no reason for any change in her," Grant went on, rising and walking up and down the floor. "I have done nothing, and she, the best, truest girl I ever knew"—the girl in the big chair shuddered a bit—"has altered her attitude toward me completely," he added. "I can't understand it."

"Only today—since she lost the jewel," whispered Madge. "I noticed—I was watching. I was in that scene—the last one, you know. And I saw her go up the stairs from the studio with you. She seemed kind enough then."

"She was," returned Grant. Then he laughed. "She even reminded me not to say that she had never done anything for me."

"Yes," said the girl, "I presume that was what she said there at the bottom of the stairs when your coat caught on the rail? I saw her help you and speak to you, but I didn't hear what she said."

"You're right, you little witch," returned Grant, crossing the room and placing his hand affectionately on the black curls.

Another silence followed. Then the girl, glancing up at the tall man standing over her, spoke perhaps a bit wistfully.

"I wonder," she said, "why it is that I never liked Helen Hayden—never—trusted her?"

The man started to draw his hand from her head, then impulsively took both hers in his.

"Do you know," he said seriously, "I'd be very angry if any one but you had said that of her. And I can't understand why I'm not angry at you now—but I'm not."

"Oh, please—please don't be angry at me!" cried the girl, her hands trembling in his. "I'll try—I'll try to like her!"

CHAPTER VI.

AT NINE o'clock the following morning all of the "extra people" who had participated in the scene in which Helen Hayden had called attention to her jewel the previous afternoon, were on hand prepared to continue the picture under the direction of their producer. The camera man had his instrument in place and was calling orders as to lights to the scene shifters and their assistanst.

All was bustle and hurry. Grant Grange, entering the "set" a few minutes thereafter, showed signs of a somewhat sleepless night. Helen Hayden taking a star's liberty, was late. Little Madge, the girl on whom Grange had called the evening before, sat a bit apart from the others, and the evening gown she wore for the scene added some years to her age.

Restlessly Grant walked up and

down, smoking one cigarette after another, unable apparently, to remain quiet in any one place. Suddenly he spied Madge sitting alone in the dark. Quickly he walked up to her.

"You must forget all that I said to you last evening," he remarked. "I was not myself, and I am sure that I have imagined any slights on the part of Miss Hayden. She is too fine to hurt one whom she knows cares for her."

"Certainly," returned Madge, but her eyes were not raised to his. "I wouldn't consider myself a good friend of yours at all if I remembered things you said to me in confidence."

"And," continued the man, "I want to assure you that you ought to like her. There can be no reason for your distrust of her. Surely she is to be trusted —any other idea is simply ridiculous."

"Ridiculous," repeated Madge.

The director was deep in thought, walking up and down within the "set," planning in his mind just how the action for the next scene should be arranged. Suddenly he paused in his walk.

"Jove!" he exclaimed aloud.

Quickly he turned and walked in the direction whence Miss Hayden usually appeared from the dressing-room above. "Hasn't she come yet?" he asked Grant, a bit impatiently, as he passed the young man and Madge.

"I haven't seen her," replied Grange.

It was at that moment that the director spied the actress at the foot of the stairs, talking to a man of attractive, tho dissipated, appearance. He watched them a moment; then, with a sigh at the necessity of occasionally waiting the convenience of such a star, resumed his striding up and down the studio floor.

"All you have to do," Helen Hayden was saying to the reporter to whom she was talking, the man she had telephoned to the evening before, "is to keep your eyes and ears open, and then get in communication with your paper when the 'story breaks,' as you say in your newspaper world. I'll do the rest."

"Just leave it to me," returned the man, following her into the studio.

"And above all things," Helen continued, turning to him, her eyes flashing, "don't let any one know here that you are a reporter, or that I gave you the tip to come. I'll never speak to you again if you make any mistake about this."

"You know that I'm your slave," and there was utter abjection in the man's voice.

Smiling upon the director, Helen Hayden approached him, words of apology for her tardiness on her lips. "But I have a good excuse," she concluded.

"And I'm in trouble," replied the director. "We have got to have a jewel to take the place of the one that was stolen from you yesterday. Like a fool I never thought of having one of the property men scurry around and try to find one like yours. We can't take the picture unless we have something for Grant to steal."

A suspicion of a frown crossed Helen's white brow; then she was all smiles again.

"And that's my excuse for being late," she said. "I did think of it, and it wasn't until the last minute that I found an imitation that very nearly matches the real thing. It cost me the huge sum of fifty cents. Here it is. I fixed a chain to it so that the whole thing is a pretty good imitation of the jewel I was wearing yesterday. What do you think of my ingenuity? The chain, at least, is real." She held out for his inspection a gleaming object attached to a fine chain of gold, and the director's eyes smiled contentedly as he looked.

"Splendid!" he exclaimed. "One would scarcely know it from the real thing."

"You would," sighed Helen, "if you had owned and been as crazy over the real jewel as I was. But don't let me delay things any longer."

"All right, get busy," replied the director, turning to his assistant, who had been following the great man about, watching for the word to place the people in the scene.

Helen Hayden moved into the dim light beyond, while the director and his assistant mingled with the "guests," instructing them as to what they should do and where they should stand in the scene about to be enacted.

Grant, who had been watching his opportunity, now approached Helen. Very humble he was, but manly. He felt that he had made himself a nuisance to her, and he was determined to have her understand that he would trouble her no more. If he could win her by thoughtfulness and tact, that he would do. But there would be no more of the persistence of which he now felt ashamed.

"Helen," he said quietly, "may I have just a word with you before we begin? I am sure that I shall do better justice to the picture if I get something off my mind."

She turned to him quickly. Then her glance passed beyond him to a figure a little distance beyond. It was that of her friend, the newspaper man. Now she replied to Grange's question.

"I think, Mr. Grange," she said, "that the less we have to say to each other today, the better. I am very much upset, you know, and fear that I might say something to hurt you—and I don't want to do that."

"Helen," continued the young man, "you must listen to me. I have puzzled my brain over the reason for your changed attitude to me, and can think of but one thing. By chance I found out about you—your unpleasant experience with—well, never mind his name—that newspaper chap and I thought——"

Helen Hayden, movie star, whirled about and faced Grange, her eyes wide. Perhaps it was fear—perhaps something else that made her hang on his words.

"Well?" she had recovered herself partially, and spoke half-defiantly.

"And I thought that you might have learned," Grange went on, "that I knew about it, and for that reason hated or feared me."

"I fear no one," whispered the girl.

"All I want to say is," and Grant's voice was very low, "that when I care for any one as I care for you, I never believe what people say of them. I trust absolutely. What I know of that matter is dead to the world. I do not even think about it, and I would stake my life that if you did anything—if there was anything that the world would criticise in it, you were perfectly justified. And no one, I believe, knows more of the facts than I do. I ask no questions. I have faith in you, and want you to trust and—perhaps, some day, care for me."

The girl was gazing at him as one dazed. Now the voice of the director came to them. He was calling out the "business" of the scene about to be enacted for the benefit of the camera and prospective spectators. Grange moved forward and Helen glided after him as one in a dream.

"Now, all you guests," the director was saying, "have seen the jewel Miss Hayden is wearing. You move slowly out of the picture, leaving Miss Hayden and Mr. Grange in the room alone. Then, Grant," he went on as Grange stepped forward, Miss Hayden just behind him, "as you know from the script, you begin to make love to Miss Hayden. You have previously cut a place in the floor behind this piece of furniture," placing his hand on a small stand in one corner of the set, "which hole is supposed to lead into a tube running into the cellar where your accomplice is supposed to be waiting, watching for the gem to drop thru. Of course, there is no hole here, or no cellar, and the thing is a bit fishy, but will get by. Now you maneuver Miss Hayden over here. She repulses your advances, and in your brief struggle you break the chain which holds the jewel, and it drops behind this stand. You are supposed to kick it into the hole. Then you are all consternation. You call wildly, perhaps—just as you conceive it—and the guests rush in again. That is to give your accomplice time to get the gem and beat it. Finally, of course the other scenes show the search for the jewel in the cellar and—but," concluded the director, "that will be explained when we get to it. Now," and he turned again to the "guests," "all ready? We may have to retake this scene as it will not be an easy matter for Mr. Grange to get that jewel to fall behind the stand the first time he tries it. Get to your places."

Helen Hayden, her eyes flashing now, took the seat she had been occupying the day before when work had been stopped; the "extra" people did likewise, and Grant Grange stood a little apart, his face registering the look called for by the picture.

Once Miss Hayden glanced beyond the confines of the "set," and seemed satisfied when she saw her newspaper friend intent upon the picture. Once, at the direction of the commander of affairs they walked thru the scene as he had instructed them, but Grange and Miss Hayden made little attempt to interpret their parts as they would when the camera would be taking the scene. The chain holding the jewel was not broken, but the suggested action went to suit the director, and again the actors took their places for the actual test.

"Just like that!" cried the director, when all were in their places. "Ready, we're off! Grind!"

The camera man began to grind his machine and the "guests" started to withdraw from the scene. Only Helen Hayden and Grant Grange remained motionless, their faces expressing the emotions under which they were supposed to be laboring. Out in the wings stood Miss Hayden's newspaper friend, his eyes big, watching for what he knew not.

Grange moved close to the girl and bent over her. Low-spoken words came from his lips, tender, endearing. He was putting his heart into the part he was playing, and never had he made love more convincingly.

Now the girl rose to her feet and looked him squarely in the face. Her lips were pressed tight together as Grant reached for her hands. All about, just outside of the range of the camera stood the extra people, interested in the intense scene that was being enacted. Little Madge, her eyes open wide, leaned forward slightly. Her hands were clinched. The camera clicked, clicked, and Grant Grange, now tender to make the approaching struggle the more impressive, whispered endearing words into the ears of the girl he loved—loved in real life as well as in the story of the picture in which he was taking part.

Then, like a flash, suddenly it came, Helen Hayden, her eyes shining with hate, all attempt at simulation apparently falling from her, threw her hands forward, pressing them roughly against the man so near to her, and fairly reeled backward.

"I can't do it," she cried. "I can't do it! It is all too real! I'm a woman before I am an actress! Take him away from me! I can't stand it!"

Grant Grange, aghast, raised his hand to his forehead. His white face grew wondering, his hands trembled.

For just an instant the director stood as one stunned. The camera ground on, its click, click, distinct in the intense stillines that pervaded the studio. Then his voice came sharp as he stared forward toward the girl and dazed man.

"Cut!" he shouted to the camera man. "What is it!" he went on quickly, taking Helen by the hand. "What is the matter?"

"Take him away from me—him—Grant Grange! I meant to protect him, but this makes it all too real. Take him away!" Her white hand was stretched out; her long, tapering finger pointed to the actor who stood lost in wonder. "There," she cried again, "there is the thief!"

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

Not So Easy Now.

A Scottish prison chaplain, recently appointed, entered one of the cells on his first round of inspection and thus addressed the prisoner who occupied it.

"Well, my man, do you know who I am?"

"No, nor I dinna care!" was the nonchalant reply.

"Well, I'm your chaplain."

"Oh, ye are? Then I hae heard o' ye before!"

"And what did you hear?" returned the chaplain, his curiosity getting the better of his dignity.

"Well, I heard that the last twa kirks ye were in ye preached them baith empty; but I can say ye willna find it quite sae easy to do the same wi' this one."

A Father's Plea.

"Mister Jedge," said the old colored citizen, who came into the justice court leading a small negro boy by the coat collar, "Mister Jedge, I wish you'd please, suh, give dis boy ten years whar de State'll furnish de vittles fer him."

"What do you mean?" asked the astonished justice. "What has he been doing?"

"Eatin' me out er house en home, suh," was the reply, "wid dat ongodly appetite er his. Why, Jedge, de appetite er de whale dat swallowed Jonah couldn't hol' a candle ter dat boy's eatin' arrangements. Fer de Lawd's sake, Jedge, let de State feed him a while, so's de yuder chillun kin pick up en enjoy life."

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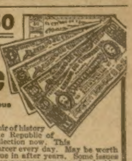

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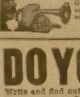

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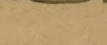

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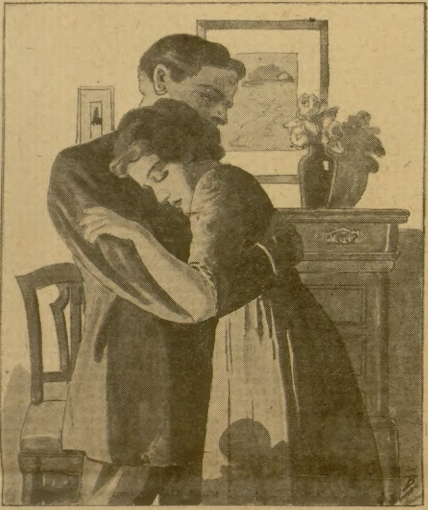
By Marquis James



"The cunning creature!"

CHAPTER X.

WITH his eyes glued on the blazing captions, Orr stumbled into a cab, mumbled the address where Rose lived to the driver, and sank back on the cushions to peruse the article. This is what he read:

> "Kolberg, Oligarchia, June 8.—The second startling murder of a member of the royal family of Oligarchia was disclosed this morning when the body of Crown Prince Eitel of Regalshofen was found in a remote corner of the palace grounds. The discovery was made by an officer of the imperial palace guard.
>
> "This appalling crime confirms the reports which spread thruout Europe when Crown Prince Rudolph, the eldest son of King Leopold, was assassinated a month ago. It can no longer be denied that a plot is on foot to exterminate the reigning house of Oligarchia. It appears that with the murder of Prince Eitel the conspirators have succeeded. King Leopold is without heir—his third and youngest son, Prince Robin, having fled the royal palace nine years ago, changing his name and losing himself to the world.
>
> "The kingdom is in a state of chaos. The royal authority is flouted on all sides, and the army is busy thruout the kingdom putting down open rebellions. The capital is under martial law. The tyrannical King Leopold, whose oppressions have made him the most cordially hated monarch on earth, is reported to be near death from the shock of the news of the murder of his second son.
>
> "Only a month ago Rudolph was slain as he rode home from a hunt at the edge of the royal game preserve. The murder was one of the most daring and baffling crimes against a royal house ever committed in modern times. It was also one of the most carefully planned. The murderer used a new kind of firearm, hitherto unknown. It was a silent gun, which without explosion sends forth a steel dart, not unlike a needle, in place of a bullet.
>
> "Eitel was slain with the same sort of weapon. The second murder was even more daring than the first. The assassin either was inside the palace grounds, or fired his dart from some nearby building. From the position in which the body was found the first theory—startling as it is—is considered the most plausible. Every servant and retainer within the royal palace has been detained for rigid investigation. This order was dictated by the King himself, and but one man in the entire palace entourage was spared. He is Alfred Mulhausen, the royal secretary, a man greatly trusted by his majesty, and who now is assisting in the direction of the investigation of the crime.
>
> "Prince Eitel was last seen alive about ten o'clock last night. He had conferred with his father and Prime Minister Von Vlissingen on state affairs, and left, presumably to go to his chambers and retire. One of the palace doorkeepers reports he walked out into the palace gardens. Eitel was noted for his democratic ways, a fact which caused his despotic father much grief. He dropped a cheery remark to the humble doortender to the effect that he was going out for a stroll in the fresh air.
>
> "The Prince was of studious disposition, and nightly rambles were matters of common occurrence. When he did not return, the doorkeeper was not alarmed, thinking his highness had returned to the palace by another entrance.
>
> "The time of the murder has not been fixed, tho it is thought that the Prince must have been slain shortly after he left the palace. Life had been extinct for some hours when the body was found shortly after dawn.
>
> "The fall of the house of Regalshofen, entailing the possible collapse of the monarchial authority in Oligarchia, appears inevitable. The fate of the kingdom seems to rest with the conspiracy, regarding which there is wide conjecture of opinion. The chief surmise, however, is that the conspiracy is directed by a secret liberalist propaganda which looks toward the establishment of a republic. A second theory is that the plot is of the making of the old Orlandoff loyalists. This theory is regarded as somewhat farfetched, in that there is not certain knowledge that an heir to the Orlandoff house is now living.
>
> "It is no secret in Kolberg that the last hope of the Regalshofen house is a slender one. It is pinned upon, first, the discovery and overturning of the conspiracy before the death of Leopold, which is believed to be a matter of days; and second, the location of Prince Robin—that is, if the vagabond heir to the throne still lives. It is believed that Robin, who has endeared himself to the people by the contempt he has shown for his father's despotic program, would be received with acclaim should he return and take the throne.
>
> "The hope is held out that the news of his second brother's death and the illness of his aged father, reaching him in some alien land, may awaken the fire for revenge in his blood, thus spurring him to return, champion the cause of the regular liberalist party, and with their backing assume the throne and begin a war to death upon the murderous conspirators. The regular liberalists number many of the best minds in the kingdom, ex-officials as well as the great majority of the masses who have been alienated from the conservative or throne party by the despotic acts of Leopold.
>
> "It is unofficially reported that Minister Von Vlissengen had inaugurated a secret search for Prince Robin in an effort to induce him to return and work toward saving the kingdom."

Orr concluded the reading of the dispatch and sat as in a dull daze as the cab bore him on toward his sweetheart—who a few moments before had filled his thoughts and who now by the crushing avalanche of events was entirely obliterated from them.

He shouted to the driver to draw up at the next corner. Before the cab had stopped, Orr leaped from the step, dashed up to the sidewalk newstand, and gathered up a copy of each newspaper on display. A word to the cabby, and they were again on their way.

"It's true, it's true!" he murmured, when at last he had completed his research. "Every paper has the same story. My dear brothers, my poor old father—my own, my native land!"

In one of the papers, a picture, displayed over two columns, caught his eye. Orr looked at it closely. It was a picture of himself, an old one, taken before he left his father's court. Above it appeared this legend in bold, clear type: "THE ROYAL EXILE—PRINCE ROBIN. A TOTTERING KINGDOM'S ONLY HOPE." Beneath the picture ran this narrative:

> "The above photograph is of Prince Robin of Regalshofen who nine years ago declared himself disgusted with the autocratic rule of his father and fled his father's court. He never has been heard from since, tho rumor has it he came to America, where he has followed various occupations to earn his livelihood. Unless he already fills some unmarked grave, this self-exiled Prince now is the heir to a throne and the hope of a kingdom. Private dispatches from Kolberg state Prime Minister Von Vlissengen is scouring the earth by cable to locate the runaway Prince and persuade him to return. The people love him and would support him in a fight against the conspirators who are trying to exterminate the royal family to keep the throne and bring peace to the rich kingdom long distracted by tyranny and misrule."

Orr studied the picture and the words under it intently. The germ of his ambitious idea already had taken root. The disguised Prince, his brain still awhirl from the suddenness of the blow, began plans for his immediate embarkation to Europe. It was not yearning or thirst for glory or power that moved him. It was revenge—cold, calculating revenge for the murder of his brothers. And revenge, even more than a woman's love, will carry a man to the end of the earth to achieve his purpose.

"It's the Orlandoffs!" Orr murmured to himself, recalling court secrets of old. "It's the Orlandoffs—curse them! But by the God of my ancestors, they shall not succeed in their base design—not so long as the breath of life is in my body!"

The cab halted with a jolt that

PUZZLED

Hard, Sometimes, to Raise Children.

Children's taste is oftimes more accurate, in selecting the right kind of food to fit the body, than that of adults. Nature works more accurately through the children.

A Brooklyn lady says: "Our little boy had long been troubled with weak digestion. We could never persuade him to take more than one taste of any kind of cereal food. He was a weak little chap and we were puzzled to know what to feed him on.

"One lucky day we tried Grape-Nuts. Well, you never saw a child eat with such a relish, and it did me good to see him. From that day on it seemed as though we could almost see him grow. He would eat Grape-Nuts for breakfast and supper, and I think he would have liked the food for dinner.

"The difference in his appearance is something wonderful.

"My husband had never fancied cereal foods of any kind, but he became very fond of Grape-Nuts and has been much improved in health since using it.

"We are now a healthy family and naturally believe in Grape-Nuts.

"A friend has two children who were formerly afflicted with rickets. I was satisfied that the disease was caused by lack of proper nourishment. The children showed it. So I urged her to use Grape-Nuts as an experiment and the result was almost magical.

"They continued the food and today both children are as well and strong as any children in this city, and, of course, my friend is a firm believer in Grape-Nuts for she has the evidence before her eyes every day." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

BEAUTY DOCTOR TELLS SECRET

Detroit Beauty Doctor Gives Simple Recipe to Darken Gray Hair and Promote Its Growth

Miss Alice Whitney, a well-known beauty doctor of Detroit, Mich., recently gave out the following statement: "Anyone can prepare a simple mixture at home, at very little cost, that will darken gray hair, promote its growth and make it soft and glossy. To a half pint of water add 1 oz. of bay rum, a small box of Barbo Compound and ¼ oz. of glycerine. These ingredients can be bought at any drug store at very little cost. Apply to the hair twice a week until the desired shade is obtained. This will make a gray-haired person look twenty years younger. It is also fine to promote the growth of the hair, relieve itching and scalp disease, and is excellent for dandruff and falling hair."

brought Orr back into the world of present realities.

"At your destination, sir," announced the driver, throwing open the door.

Orr stepped out, pressed a gold-piece in the driver's hand, and the cab sped away. He stood rooted to the curb, gazing after the receding vehicle in the gathering twilight.

"What—where—how came I here?" he muttered, endeavoring to re-assort his jumbled thoughts.

"Rose! Ah, yes, I remember it all now! What have I been dreaming?" The papers he clutched rustled in his hand. He glanced at them to assure himself. "It's all true. I can't go back. I've sworn by all that's holy never to return. My Rose and I are to be married in a fortnight."

Orr's heart was ground between the millstones of conflicting resolutions. The age-old conflict of love and duty surged within him. Love won the first skirmish.

"I'll go to Rose—first," he said, with quick determination. "If she loves me it's worth more than all the thrones on earth. I'll try to test her love and see."

Orr strode across the sidewalk and mounted the steps of the mansion.

CHAPTER XI.

CROWN PRINCESS ROSALIND Eileen of Orlandoff, pretender to the throne of Oligarchia, struggled valiantly to stem the rising tide of tears. She paced the room and wrung her hands.

"Oh, these dreadful murders!" she wailed. "These horrible crimes! And I am the innocent cause of them all. The stain of blood is on my hands. It haunts my dreams by night and wrecks my peace of mind by day. Oh, God! why was I born to suffer thus? Why am I to learn after all these years I am a princess, and happiness is to be mine no more?

"It's been six months now since they told me. I learn that my entire life has been a deception. And now I'm to take a throne in a country I never have seen—far over the seas from dear America—tho they tell me I was born there. I want to be no queen. I want to be the bride of Robert Orr. And he's coming today. I have written him nothing of all this. I had hoped against hope that things would come out all right. What will he say? How can I tell him? What shall I do? What shall I do?

"I have not told my guardian, who now proves to be one of the plotters who are behind these dreadful assassinations, of my engagement to Robert. Luckily I did not. Hesitating not to kill princes of royal blood, not one moment would have been lost by these desperate criminals in putting Robert out of the way."

With the thought of her lover stabbed to death by designing conspirators, the girl could leash her emotions no longer. She threw herself upon her couch and surrendered to her grief. Presently she sat up all of a sudden and blotted away the tears.

"If he really loves me," she told herself, brightening under the idea, "if he really loves me as I believe he does, no power on earth can keep me from him—thrones, empires, kingdoms—nothing can keep me from Robert Orr. But does he love me sufficiently to brave the risk of taking me away, knowing full well we will be followed, and if caught his life will be the forfeit? Does he love me that much?

"It may be criminal to doubt his affection. But the world seems so full of intrigue and deception. Innocent child that I have been! I little suspected men could be so designing until I have been forced to witness the events of the past two weeks. I will dry my eyes and greet him. I will confess my identity—that I am not plain Rose Gordon, the art student, residing with a wealthy uncle who is my guardian, but Princess Rosalind Eileen Orlandoff, the rightful heir to the throne of Oligarchia, a quasi-prisoner under espionage. I will detail the risk he involves, but pledge myself never to be taken from him alive. Then—if he will have me—we will fly, fly to some unfrequented part of earth, safe from the crafty makers and breakers of kingdoms.

"And if he does not accede to this," the girl reflected darkly, "then he does not love me, nor is he worthy of the great love I bear him. But life without his love to me is nothing. Without the love of Robert Orr I would make a fitting queen to take the blood-steeped throne that now is being prepared for me."

The girl reflected upon her self-addressed remarks. She laughed—not the carefree, happy laugh that was her wont. A cunning, metallic, mirthless laugh it was. The laugh of a vampire.

"I'll be a vampire, if he won't have me!" she concluded. "His refusal would be the culminating straw to devastate my faith in human nature. I'll take the throne if he deserts me, and as God is my witness, I'll make a proper queen for one who won her coronation by process of murder. I'll rule a rule of ruin! I'll be a vampire queen—the queen who does not care! I'll be a Louis XIV. 'After me the deluge!' I'll make myself a Lucrezia Borgia of modern times! I'll learn the art of murder myself and practice it well.

"And after all," the girl reasoned calculatingly, "I have a right to the throne. It is a matter of history that the Regalshofens usurped their power by right of might. Indisputable proof has been produced for me, showing I am, in truth, the daughter of Grand Duke Nicholas and Duchess Lucile. My father was driven into exile, and when he died my mother was murdered by the Regalshofens. I was taken in charge by Colonel Metz and Count Patsky, who has posed as my uncle. An eye for an eye, says the Bible. They murdered my mother—I murder them. I resign myself. I take the throne if Robert weakens."

A knock at the door roused Rose.

"Who's there?" the girl demanded, not knowing whom she might expect as a caller during these eventful days.

"Your maid," came the answer.

"Come in."

"A gentleman to see you, miss," the girl announced. "Mr. Orr, he said he was."

"Oh!" Rose could not suppress the joyous cry. "Tell him to wait in the drawing-room. I'll be down as soon as I can dress and arrange my hair."

The maid departed. With haste Rose began her toilet—just like a heartfree, wholesome American girl and no princess at all. The tragedy which enveloped her life for the moment was forgotten.

"Oh, dear, dear Bobby! He's come at last. I knew he wouldn't disappoint me. We'll fly together! We'll go tonight!"

And with a final dash of the powder puff to her nose to erase the telltale trace of tears, Rose, radiant and smiling, rushed from the room and down the stairs.

And so the Princess went to greet the Prince. But so far as a casually observing world could have discerned it was merely a tripping American girl art student going to greet her lover, a bronzed mining engineer, just returned from his quest of knight errantry to prove himself worthy of the maiden he sought to claim his bride. Such a thing happens every day.

Rose paused at the door beyond which Robert waited and breathed a silent prayer.

"If he does love me," she said, "I will give up a throne to go with him!"

And inside Robert Orr murmured this supplication:

"If she loves me I will relinquish a kingdom to make her happy!"

Rose caught her foot on a rug and turned her ankle painfully just as she swung back the folding doors, then, with outstretched arms, she turned toward her fiance. And the fate of a throne was determined by just this trifle.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Robert Orr mounted the steps and rang the bell at Rose Gordon's home, thoughts of thrones and ermine were behind him. His eyes peered thru the ground glass in the door to discern the approach of his beloved when she should respond in answer to his ring. A pretty speech was on his lips.

The hallway light was switched on. He heard the light tread of a girl's slippered feet within. The latch was drawn back. Robert's heartbeat quickened. The door—the final barrier between him and his promised bride—swung back.

"My Rose——!"

The glad cry of the lover's greeting froze on the astonished young man's lips. The arms he held outstretched to embrace his sweetheart fell limply to his side.

It was not Rose who stood before him. A trim, chic, cap-and-aproned parlor maid surveyed him coldly from head to foot. Before Robert could recover his composure the servant inquired in cutting, formal tones:

"Who it it you wish to see, sir?"

The interrogation disarmed Robert,

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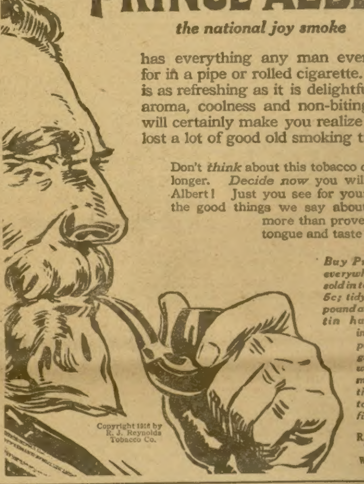
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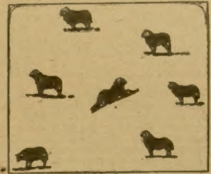
Solve This Puzzle and Win a Prize



Here are seven sheep in a pen By drawing three straight lines you can put each one in a pen by himself. If you can do this, we will send you as a prize, *a surprise package of beautiful season and greeting post cards*, lithographed in rich colors, and also a certificate of entry in our grand contest for an Overland Automobile. All you have to do is to enclose a two cent stamp in your letter to pay postage and cost of mailing.

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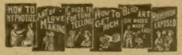

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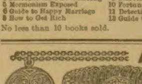

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Mr. H. C. Atteberry, Lilac, Neb., writes: "I have used sample box of Cranolene. It has done me more good than anything I have ever used. Enclosed find $5 to pay for the good you've already done me." Postal will bring you FREE what Mr. Atteberry gratefully paid $5.00 for.

whose nerves already were on a ragged edge.

"Why, er—er—r—" he stammered—"was not some one expecting me?"

"I was not told that callers were expected," returned the maid.

A depressing pause ensued.

"Whom did you wish to see, sir?" the maid repeated a bit impatiently. "This is the residence of Mr. Geoffrey Gordon and his niece, Miss Rose Gordon."

"Why," gasped Robert, "I wish to see Miss Rose, of course."

"She retired to her room early in the afternoon, and left orders not to be disturbed, sir!"

Robert was ill-prepared for this blow. A thousand fears stampeded his confused brain. Rose retired and asked not to be disturbed? Not ready to receive him when she knew full well the date and hour of his arrival? What did it all mean? He leaned against the wall. Cold sweat beads stood out upon his brow. He mopped his face with a handkerchief.

The impassive maid still surveyed him. Suddenly Robert divined the cause of her searching curiosity. He had not even delayed to change his clothes in his haste to reach his sweetheart. He wore the same rude apparel as when he had left the mines—scarcely appropriate attire in which to present oneself to make a formal evening call in a fashionable section of New York.

Robert fumbled his pockets, knowing full well he had no card, a fact he managed to communicate to the maid amid profound embarrassment. She looked daggers at him. Surely a person in such disreputable attire, without even that superficial badge of gentility to sponsor his good name—a card—could be regarded with none but utmost suspicion.

"Your name then, Mr.——" the servant demanded.

"Orr, Robert Orr," he stammered, greatly relieved.

"Very well, sir," replied the maid. "I will find out if Miss Rose will see you, Mr. Orr."

With a superior lift of her chin, the girl turned on her heel and tripped up the carpeted stairs. Orr waited, ill at ease, his doubts growing all the time. What was the meaning of it all? His ear caught a light footstep on the stairs. He glanced up, hopefully. It was the maid. His heart sank again.

"Mr. Orr, Miss Rose begs you to excuse her tardiness; she has been ill," the maid's voice and manner were wonderfully changed. "She will be down at once. Meanwhile you are to wait in the drawing-room. This way, please."

The words were life's own elixir!

The maid lighted the stately reception chambers as Robert entered.

"Be seated, sir," she waved the caller to one of the elaborate Queen Anne chairs, a style in which the room was furnished thruout.

The maid vanished. Robert's eyes ran a quick survey about the luxuriously appointed apartment, quite different from the rather mediocre quarters which Rose and her uncle had occupied before he went South. His mind alert again, he wondered at the evident and sudden change of her fortunes, and marveled, too—not without dark, unjust surmisings—why she had made no mention of it in her letters.

Robert faced the door thru which Rose would enter. It had been only two minutes since he had entered the parlor, yet he thought it many hours. What was keeping Rose? Why had she not been ready to greet him? Bitter doubts again assailed him.

Two more minutes dragged themselves by. Robert was desperate. Rose did not love him; he was sure of it. Again his thoughts were carried back across the seas—his native land and the ties of birth and blood that bound him there beckoned. He was all but resolved to leave the house precipitately, cable von Vlissengen, and take the next boat to Oligarchia.

Another moment passed. No Rose.

"She's false; she's been tricking me," he told himself. "Am I blind that a brick house must fall on me before I can divine a girl's unspoken intentions? Is not this unwelcome reception proof positive she does not love me?"

Robert was on his feet—he strode toward the door—to leave America and Rose forever. A footstep in the hall halted his madly conceived dash. Was it Rose? He waited and peered thru the portieres into the dim-lit hall beyond. He wanted just one glimpse of her countenance before she should see him. One look, under such conditions, he told himself and his question as to whether she loved him would be answered.

In an instant Robert saw the lithe, svelte figure of Rose Gordon outlined just behind the curtained doorway. Ah, her face! He saw it and caught the expression there—it was anything but a look of love—anything but a welcome.

Robert had seen the expression of pain on the girl's face as she had turned her ankle. He was correct—at just that moment the light of love was not in Rose Gordon's eyes. The girl's face was radiant as she burst into the room.

"Robert!"

She flung herself into his arms.

"The cunning creature," he said to himself, as he held her there. "How cleverly she plays her part!"

The interview between Rose Gordon and Robert Orr was a strained, painful, misundertanding one. Robert sought the depths of Rose's dark, liquid eyes—sought for some smoldering sign of the old love that lay there. But he sought in vain, for there is none so blind as he who will not see. Rose was unable to explain her tardiness without disclosing the secret of her identity. Robert's heart, tho he did not know it, was in Oligarchia sorrowing at the bier of his dead brother. And so they parted—did Rose and Robert, the incognito Princess and Prince—each believing the other's affection had grown cold, and both were wrong. Each had been made the toy of fateful circumstances. Both were desperate.

"I'll be the vampire queen," Rose vowed thru her tears, as she returned to her room.

"I'll wreak my vengeance against the world by taking my father's throne and driving this vile conspiracy to earth," said Robert, as he wandered out into the night, "and then I'll reign with an iron hand—I'll know no law earthly or divine, and I'll fear neither God nor man."

CHAPTER XIII.

ROBERT hailed a hack and was driven to the Desborough-Buckingham, one of the fashionable caravansaries uptown. A belle or so in the famous "peacock alley" promenade gasped as the miner swung thru the brilliant lobby and strode up to the registry desk.

"Excuse my attire," he addressed the astounded clerk, forefending a question. "I'm just in from Rio de Janeiro, and haven't had time to change. I'm a miner. I want a room with bath—for tonight. I'll be going tomorrow."

Robert took the proffered pen, and in his full, free hand dashed this across the registry:

"Robert J. Orr, Kolberg, Oligarchia."

While the Desborough-Buckingham was not given to housing baggageless strangers, let alone a tanned mountaineer in his "roughing it" clothes, there was something about Orr's manner that the clerk did not deem it advisable to challenge.

"What rate room, Mr. Orr?" inquired the officious functionary. "We have them five dollars, seven and a half, ten——"

"A ten-dollar one!" interrupted Robert.

"Very well, Mr. Orr. Front! Boy show this gentleman up to M 36."

"This way, sir," announced the bellhop.

Robert followed his guide up to the M, or thirteenth, floor in a gilded elevator—a recent invention in those days—to his room.

"Anything for you, sir?" asked the hop, as he opened the door.

"Yes, a pitcher of ice water, pen, ink, and stationery, and a transatlantic sailing schedule," replied Orr.

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir." The hop's fingers closed on the coin Orr thrust into his palm, and he was gone.

An hour later Robert Orr was poring over the sailing schedule. The liner Oklahoma sailed the next evening. He would take it. On the table before him he had scrawled the rough draft of a long cablegram addressed to Von Vlissengen, telling the prime minister to hold the fort until he, Prince Robin, could arrive.

Just then the telephone rang.

"A reporter from the Sun is here," announced the hotel clerk over the wire. "He noted you were registered from Kolberg, so he wants to interview you on the royal assassinations there."

"Tell him I have nothing to say—absolutely nothing. I have not been in Kolberg for a number of years."

"But the young man insists——"

"I have nothing to say!" Orr shouted in the transmitter, and banged up the receiver.

"I was foolish to register from Kolberg," he reproved himself, "I should have known it would have aroused the curiosity of those irrepressible reporters. I'll surely not repeat that mistake when I take passage on the boat."

Another hour and Robert had completed his plans for the morrow. He would cable Von Vlissengen first, then while awaiting a reply make a hurried trip downtown, retrieve his belongings from the Thor, and throw together a readymade wardrobe sufficient to serve him for a trip across on the liner without exciting curiosity or suspicion.

He began to make ready to turn in for the night when the telephone rang again.

"This is the clerk speaking," the voice announced. "A messenger has just arrived with a note which he says must be delivered to you at onee."

"Send it up by a bellboy," replied Orr.

"He will intrust it to no one. Says it must be delivered in person, or not at all."

"Who sends him?" Orr asked.

"He refuses to disclose that," the clerk answered. "He acts very mysterious about it, sir."

"Unless he submits to send it up by a bellboy I cannot be seen," Orr returned, and hung up the receiver.

The clerk was mystified. He was already suspicious of this strangely habited guest who said he hailed from South America and yet who had registered from Oligarchia. The episode of the urgent message increased his alarms. He relieved himself by laying the whole matter before Grayson, the house detective. Grayson listened intently to the clerk's story, asked a few curt, estimating questions, and promised an investigation.

On the other hand Orr had attached no significance to the conversation with the clerk regarding the messenger. He well knew the ruses and subterfuges of the American newspaper reporter and reckoned the story of the note merely a clever invention by which a reporter planned to gain entrance to his room. He thought no more about it, and went off to sleep.

The next morning as he descended to breakfast, the day clerk halted him.

"A note for you, Mr. Orr," said he. "It was left last night."

Orr ripped open the envelope and read:

"Dearest Robert: Forgive me for the way I have received you. Some-

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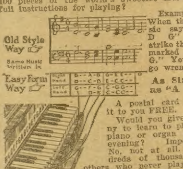

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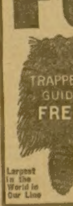

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thing dreadful has happened. I told you nothing because I wanted to spare you. But I can't give you up. Robert, you are all the world to me. Return at once. This is imperative. Reach the house before midnight, or all is lost. I will tell you all if you love me and will fly with me now. If you love me your return will be your answer. If not, stay away. Life without you is not worth living. Your own, ROSE."

Orr sank into a chair in the lobby. He scrutinized the handwriting. Yes, it was Rose's. His brain again was in a whirl. He made no attempt to understand the note, or explain it. It was unfathomable. He hastened from the hotel, and in another moment was being rapidly driven toward Rose's address.

He rang the bell repeatedly. There was no response. He started toward the back door. Passing one of the huge front windows he looked inside. The house was empty! Every item of the elaborate furnishings in the drawing-room in which he had been the night before had been removed. The room was utterly bare.

From the rear porch he peered thru another window—that of the kitchen. That room, too, had been dismantled. He tried the door. It was bolted. But Robert Orr was in no mood to be halted. He forced the window and drew himself inside the house.

He tramped from room to room. The evidence of a hasty withdrawal of contents were on every hand. The lights still burned in the dining-room.

"In their haste they neglected to turn them out," Robert noted. "Without doubt Rose has been made the victim of some vile conspiracy. Last night her lips were sealed. By whom? God only knows. Ah, I see it all too plainly now. But I will find her and ferret out this enigma at any cost."

And so it was that love regained what it had lost in the battle. The tottering throne of Oligarchia again was forgotten—by Robert, but not by the plotters who held in their hands the fate of beautiful Rose Gordon.

CHAPTER XIV.

ROBERT ORR continued his rapid but thoro inspection of the hastily denuded house. Perhaps, he reckoned, in their precipitation something had been left behind which would shed light on this absolutely baffling and hopeless mystery. A scrap of paper or a card might reveal something as to the motive of the sudden leavetaking Robert sought for, but in vain.

Ah, Count Patsky had been too clever for that. After guarding and shielding the Princess Rosalind Eileen of Orlandoff for fifteen long years he was not to have the prize snatched from his grasp upon the very eve of the realization of his hopes.

Thru the spying offices of the maid who had greeted Orr at the door the evening before, he had learned of Rose's secret infatuation for the young man who recently had returned from South America. Well knowing the cunning of girls in love, he resolved to take no chances. Rose was to be moved, bag and baggage, before another sun had risen, and moved she was. The girl, thru a newsboy whom she had once befriended, had managed to slip the note out to Robert's hotel. The Count's method had been thoro. He had left nothing behind which could have been of service to one who would follow him.

Robert reasoned that it must have taken several teams with huge vans and many men to have moved the furnishings of a ten-room mansion within the space of a few hours. He made inquiries thruout the neighborhood. No one had seen or heard the coming or going of moving vans.

He learned that the Gordons—uncle and niece as the people supposed—kept much to themselves, and had not invited acquaintance with the families about them.

Back he went to the deserted house for another search. It had rained during the night, and the ground off the paved streets was thick with mud. Robert noted the tracks over the bare floors. They were of a peculiar reddish clay, unlike the soil in that section of New York.

"I have it," he cried suddenly, after an examination of the soil thus deposited by the movers. "I know where that clay comes from. It can be found in but one place in New York. I learned that two years ago when I was here studying the properties of the various soils preparatory to my mining trip to South America."

Orr was right. The soil deposited about in the tracks of the conspirator crew who had assisted Count Patsky in his rapid getaway, was peculiar to but a small area in New York. And Robert knew the locality—a couple of miles west of Central Park it was—then a residence quarter of the nouveau riche, now a decadent section of mansions, basking in the lengthening shadows of glories which waxed and waned in another day.

* * * *

Several days passed. Robert's attire ceased to be a mark of curiosity in the gay corridors and dining-halls of the Hotel Desborough-Buckingham. He had fitted himself out in accordance with the prevailing fashions. Needless to say the etiquette he had learned in the courts of Europe sufficed among New York's millionaires.

Not many recognized him as the strange figure who had registered a week before. But Grayson, the house detective, was not one of those. He marked the sudden metamorphosis of the guest in M 36. Likewise he noted his irregular arrivals and departures to and from the hotel.

"That fellow Orr is up to something, and he's acting mighty mysterious about it," observed Grayson to the night clerk. "I've searched his effects in his room without gaining any satisfactory information. I'll have to follow him on one of his rambles some night and see what I can learn."

It is not to be wondered at that Orr's activities did excite the suspicions of a man whose business it is to suspect everything that is not superficially apparent. For a week Orr had tramped the vicinity of Central Park west without adding a single fact to his scant and not dependable store of information regarding the whereabouts of Rose Gordon. He had decided after a week's fruitless efforts to play a waiting game, but a game he intended to win. Defeat only spurred him to greater efforts. The more baffling the case grew, the more determined he became.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

Showers.

"Matrimony means a lot of hubbub and trouble!" muttered Funk.

"And that's not all," said Doozen. "Matrimony costs a lot of money."

"I don't mind the money so much as the hubbub and confusion."

"Well, I do mind the money," insisted Doozen. "Every time a girl gets married it costs not only her dad, but everybody all round a big pile of money.

"Look at that Fizert girl who just got married. Everybody felt called upon to give her a dinner or some sort of function, and all the guests at these affairs for the bride-to-be had to take a present.

"Lately a friend of my daughter's got married, and my daughter got invited to nineteen of these fool 'showers,' as they call 'em. That meant that I had to come across for nineteen presents. I got a cold chill every time my daughter came near me until that girl was finally married. I could always see what was coming—another party, another shower and another present for that girl."

"It's a good thing, however, to put money in circulation."

"Maybe. But after the presents for the bride-to-be had cost me $65 there was some talk of postponing the wedding.

"As soon as I got wind of that I called my daughter and said: 'This will never do. This wedding has got to come off before every last one of us dads is broke. I shall certainly call a dads' meeting of protest and see to it that this girl gets married at once.'

"I got in touch with several dads who had been pumped for $50 or $60 and we got after the bride-to-be's dad, and he used logic on the principals and persuaded them not to postpone it.

"He showed them that this continuous postponement on account of showers or rain or whatever it was wouldn't do. 'The people are worn out,' he said, 'and you'll do well if you get as much as a sprinkle the next time. You'd better pull this wedding off at once, rain or shine.'

"So they did."

"Well, I haven't found weddings much of a nuisance in a mercenary way," said Funk, "but I do hate the blamed parties and fuss. Why, darn it, my stenographer is going to get married! And my bookkeeper, and my cook, not to mention my own son!"

"Oh, that's where the shoe pinches, is it?"

"The cook?"

"No, the son."

"Why, yes. A man's a fool to marry. Why should he? I get off at the next stop. I'm late again. My wife didn't get me away on time this morning."

"I'm late, too," answered Doozen. "My wife couldn't find my hat."

* * *

Lucky Babies.

"Babies are a nuisance," said Uncle Crusty, as he trundled the perambulator on Sunday afternoon.

"Well, I don't know," answered Imkins. "We grown people are just about as much of a nuisance to the babies as the babies are to us."

"On the contrary," Crusty made answer, "I think perhaps the babies have all the best of it. For instance, if you take a baby out anywhere and he doesn't like it, all he has to do is squall and he is carried right out. It is one of the greatest cinches I ever heard of!

"Suppose you are out spending the evening simply as a matter of duty, calling on people you have to call on and whom you should have called on long ago. Being an ordinary grown person, you have to sit there, stifling yawns and trying to watch the clock without the clock without ever appear- to do so!

"But if you were an infant you could raise such a row that they would have to take you home.

"Suppose you are attending a performance at the theater, which turns out to be a collection of old familiar jokes. If you were a baby you could raise a howl and in a few minutes be in your little downy.

"Just the other day I was at a performance where there wasn't a thing to look at but a couple of glasses and a water pitcher on a table, and nothing to listen to but an argument, when suddenly a baby set up a howl and was carried away in triumph. I certainly wished that I was that baby."

"But babies are not always carried out," objected Imkins. "Sometimes their parents work the sh-sh-sh on them, and jostle them around and hand them from one person to another and from one arm to the other."

"Well, even that is better than sitting in a chair and doing nothing at all. I am sure that being sh-sh-ed and handed around is quite a diversion.

"They work these various soothing performances on the babies and get them to sleep.

"Now, sleeping is one of the best ways in the world of passing the time. When the baby is taken out to spend the evening he is put to sleep and laid on a nice soft sofa, and while the big folks are yawning over their cards, he is getting in lots of choice new hay.

"When he is at an entertainment, instead of wearing himself out against a hard bench, he is held in some one's arms and jostled to sleep. How many times have I been lined up with the listening old ones when I would fain have been among the lucky snoozers!"

* * *

His Name.

"Your name?" asked the teacher, who was registering a new pupil.

"Arthur."

"And what's your first name?"

"Brown."

"Oh, haven't you got them wrong? I think Arthur must be your first name and Brown your family name. Isn't that right?"

But the small pupil was not persuaded. A day or two later he announced:

"Teacher, mother says Brown is my first name. She says I got that name when I was born and she didn't name me Arthur till three months later!"

* * *

Puzzled.

A new regulation in a certain coal mine required that each man mark with chalk the number on every car of coal mined.

One man named Rudolph, having filled the eleventh car, marked it with a No. 1 and, after pondering a while, let it go at that.

Another miner, happening to notice what he thought was a mistake, called Rudolph's attention to the fact that he had marked the car No. 1 instead of 11.

"Yes, I know," said Rudolph; "but I can't tink which side de odder wan go on."

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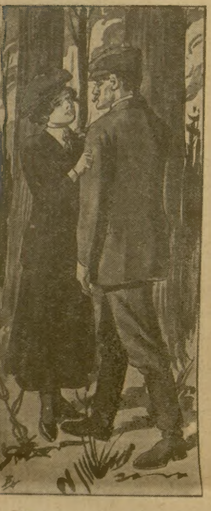

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Begun in No. 48, November 27. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AUGUST drew nigh with its pitiless glare of sunshine that followed a July drouth. The down timber and brush of slashings dried to tinder; the earth baked in sun-heat, the roadways sent up smothering clouds of dust after disturbing wheels; in fields was heard the rasp of locusts while in treetops the cicada shrilled its insistent tune.

On a day of extreme heat, Floyd was called some miles into the country concerning business for the company. A desirable tract was offered to the firm thru Nordyke, and the manager was obliged to look it over and decide upon its value. At the Brett home he picked up Phil, and the two set forth with the team at a walk. The air shimmered like pulsating heat from a furnace; fields were wilted as if struck by a blight; the shrill of insects suggested intolerable drouth.

"If fires started they would sweep the country," Floyd affirmed, with an anxious gaze at the drooping landscape.

"Heat brings rain," Phil declared hopefully. "This should end in a thundershower."

Their way led to the Company's winter slash, then over a succession of hills to the back line of the township. Foam flecked the sides of the lagging bays when they sighted the farm home of Matt Tucker, whom Floyd wished to see. Tucker, arrayed for comfort in shirt with sleeves rolled to elbow, jean overalls, and straw hat stuffed with green leaves for safety from sunstrokes, came forward to greet them.

"Me sell a forty!" he ejaculated, feet planted wide apart and his perspiring face a picture of astonishment. "Not by a long shot, Mr. Floyd. I had Mandy write that skinflint of a bookkeeper that my land was my own for keeps. I said tell that leech that when I had a mind to make a present to Steel and Hawley I'd let him hear the news."

"Do I understand you to say you were not expecting me to look over that timber?" Floyd demanded, amazed and angry. "Didn't you send for me?"

"Not by a jugful," Tucker assured him, and spat to emphasize his denial.

"Then, if you'll kindly allow me to feed my team in your barn, I'll go back and see what this means," Floyd requested.

During the next hour the manager and his son partook of the new potatoes, green peas, and other wholesome viands set out by "Mandy;" then, leaving the bill under his plate which Mrs. Tucker refused in payment, Floyd secured his team and started back. A breeze now fanned their faces as they drove westward, yet the air was stifling. As they drove on the smoke of some distant fire commenced to tinge the atmosphere. Presently the pungent odor became annoying. Soon they entered a gray haze of drifting smoke that stung the eyes and filled their lungs. The Brett clearing lay under a gray cloud. Sam, with eyes wide with terror, informed Floyd that the woods beyond the Blair mill was in flames.

"Then," the manager declared, "nothing can save it."

Again he wondered at the misstatement which had taken him from the spot at a critical hour. Leaving Phil at the cottage he took up the negro in order to send back his team from the lake. At the shore near the depleted rollways he alighted, took possession of a rowboat on the beach, and started to row to the firm's big mill. His design was twofold; he wished to learn if help had been sent from the crew, and he wanted to investigate Nordyke's attitude in the matter. Dark suspicion filled his mind. His fool's errand, this immediate holocaust, the log-spiking, Brett's murder, all commenced to weld together in one chain of correlated disaster.

He wasted no time seeking help to speed his boat across the large basin of the lower lake; he knew every man would be at the front of the rapidly progressing fire-wall. As he flung wide strokes into the dark water he could see the racing flames licking up the timber of the south bluff. Over the lake settled a pall of shifting smoke that darkened the heavens and made the sun, setting afar over the great sand dunes, seem another mighty conflagration. Near the small pier he found the tug at anchor with steam up and Bill Hyde leaning over the side. The roar of machinery at the nearby mill was proof that the night gang were at work.

"Why haven't the crew joined the firemen?" demanded Floyd, as soon as he could make himself heard above the tumult.

"Waiting for orders," Bill retorted coolly, and reversed his quid to the left cheek.

"Men don't require orders in a case like this!" the manager shouted angrily.

"Mr. Floyd," Bill explained, as he rid himself of tobacco juice, "we've had orders from the only other man in authority, and he told us the fire wan't none o' our d——d business and to keep away."

"Nordyke?" questioned the manager, his suspicion in full force.

"He's the jigger," admitted Bill. "And thinking your ideas might be contrary, I kept up steam and waited 'stead of gitting a tow."

"Give the emergency call!" ordered Floyd. "And keep it up!"

Instantly the captain reached for the whistle cord and sent forth long-drawn, reverberating blasts that brought two score waiting men from the boarding-house and lumber-yards.

"They was ready," commented Bill. "Didn't dare to go without orders. They have families, an' Nordyke said he'd fire 'em if they went; an' none o' them could stand for two fires, so they waited."

"Where's Mann?" Floyd asked.

"He and Bob Stray went hours ago," Hyde told him. "Saw the fire soon after it started and skipped. But he didn't put it out," grinned the captain, with an expressive motion toward the hills.

The volunteers now swarmed the deck, talking with one another or with Floyd, and Bill signaled Bud Hatch to start the engine. Obediently the Indian Queen commenced to puff her way across the lake in the swift-gathering darkness. Beyond her the fire raged in fearful beauty; the hill-range, uprising from the water's edge, was wrapped in devouring flame that shot upward in fire-tongues and raced eastward with the breeze.

"Rush her along," advised Watson.

"We won't git there for the doxology," complained Brinkley.

"Whoop 'er up!" demanded Sprik.

In response, the captain thrust his black head out of the pilot-house and apostrophized his one-man crew.

"Get on steam, you condèmned, dashed, wall-eyed sucker! Think this here's a funeral? Think we're a condemned passel of mourners?"

"You'll be the corpse if you don't shut your dod-blasted, oath-spitting face," came promptly from the rear engine pit. "She's eating down slabs like a hawg in a sweet corn patch!"

The captain's simile was well chosen. He might have been Charon, the dread boatman of the lower regions and the flame-lighted, smoke-clouded lake might easily represent the river Styx. His shadowy passengers, leaning over the rail, could have been mistaken for the sojourners to another bourne. Nearer and nearer to the flame-spitting, spark-showering range sped the Indian Queen, until anchor was cast and the landing boat sent ashore men and cargo of shovels, axes, and pails.

"Go down to the fire-front," commanded Floyd, "and call back the Blair crew. Hilliker says the only chance is to back-fire. If we do that we'd catch them like rats in a trap."

"He's right," declared Bat Davitt, who was addressed.

"Use the skiff for speed and take Sprik along. Tell them to count their men. There must be no one left between the fire lines."

"I'll see to it," declared Davitt, and started off with Jim Sprik to aid in delivering the message. A scant half mile down the shore the two men landed and sought those who had been vainly contending against the fiery element. One by one they discovered dark forms with grimed faces working like fiends in an inferno. Occasionally a pine-top flashed into brilliant flame, lighting up the smut-covered features of men who calmly threw shoveled earth on covetous spurts of fire. Balsam's thin, nervous countenance and Shebonga's coppery skin betrayed the identity of the first two met.

"Floyd's brought the whole crew an, they're going to back-fire," Sprik shouted.

"Ought 'a' done it before," Balsam's voice declared thru the continuous roar of the fire, "but we was short of help. There's only a dozen besides the rollway men. We'll have them out and over to the firing line by the time you're back. Go on and help."

When Davitt and Spirk returned to the scene of action, Floyd's men were throwing an abatis across the line of the oncoming flames. In a score of places men chopped down trees that fell with tops toward the blaze, while others spaded a trench of fresh earth. This was repeated parallel with the

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advancing holocaust, until torches were applied that set the entire line in flames. Back of the workers were the Blair rollways, mill, and lumber-yard, besides the hillside residence. Still beyond to the north were the Steel and Hawley log piles, but between them and danger was the widened river. Floyd thought he understood Nordyke's inaction; the firm's rollways were safe; he cared less than nothing for the Blair interests. Instead, he had probably welcomed the element that would sweep away an unwelcome rival from the firm's pathway.

There was little time for reflection. Men were exerting every effort in controlling their now blazing abatis. In the distance trees became gigantic torches as the opposing fire seized a dead hemlock or dry cedar. Flames flung out like lurid banners from pine-tops, or licked up tinder and leaves on the sun-dried earth. Above the commanding shouts of men was the fire-roar that is like no other sound on earth. The two walls of meeting conflagration were but a few rods apart; before long the space would be measured in yards, then in feet. On the east the army of smut-grimed lumberjacks beat down tongues of darting fire that reached across the line of shoveled earth.

Out of the gloom came men and women bearing pails of refreshing water; the liquid was eagerly quaffed, sponged into smarting eyes, or poured over scorched clothing as the workers entered the zone of unbearable heat. One of these was India Blair; her dark face was set and stern; her eyes were gleaming with anxiety; she was here, there, everywhere watching progress; her business costume of short corduroy skirt and jacket was soiled from contact with charred embers; she was wearied to exhaustion, but vigorous with the false strength of excitement.

"Where is Mann?" she asked Davitt, passing in a cloud of stifling smoke.

"I don't know," Davitt answered. "Didn't he come back with the men?"

"Where's the tally man?" she demanded of Balsam where he commanded the Blair division at the extreme south.

"I don't know," Balsam made her hear above the sounds that filled the air like a bedlam. "Isn't he with Floyd's men?"

Again she sped toward the lake and encountered Floyd in a space made brilliant by a flaming cedar.

"Where's Mann?" she said, repeating her monotonous query. Again she heard the negative reply:

"I don't know. Isn't he with Balsam?"

She waited for no more. With swift feet she gained the water's edge and found the skiff. Next moment she was on her way past the back-fire built in the abatis; at the smoke-filled space between the fire-walls she landed, sprang ashore, and plunged into the forest. The narrowing belt of woods was suffocating and dark. She crowded to the light of scorching flame in order to find her way. The on-marching blaze moved unevenly; she rounded points outreaching, or dipped into bays still dark. Several times she trod on turf that smoldered and burst into light, but as she groped onward she called one name:

"Forrest! Oh, Forrest!

Then, as she choked with the pungent air, she changed the cry, and the roar of falling embers mingled with the high notes of her warning shout. At last she found him in blinding smoke, unmindful that he was alone; his face was blackened; he stubbornly defended the line to which he had been allotted; he was ignorant of the rear danger, and cared nothing for the front.

"This is no place for you!" he cried, catching sight of India and waving her back.

"Nor for you," India half shouted. Then the grim humor of the words each spoke appealed to her, and she burst into laughter.

"Come!" she insisted, catching his arm while she explained the horror of their situation.

While she spoke he could see the east wall of fire glowing thru the darkness. At his right the flames had merged in an exultant roar. Toward the lake the space was still black with a density that promised safety. The full realization of what India had done—her possible sacrifice of life for him gave him a sense of impatient anger.

"Why did you?" he demanded, as with an arm flung about her he rushed her toward safety. "You must have been mad," he groaned. "What possessed you to enter this inferno?" They were forced to pause. A cone of fire that had been a giant hemlock tottered and fell across their path. The glare lighted their faces, showed the grime on clothing and flesh, the agony of desperation in his blue eyes, the luminous light of love in her dark orbs.

"Because," she owned boldly, with arms about his neck and her cheek close to his lips, "life is worthless without you. I'd rather die here and now with you than go out alone!"

"Oh, my darling, my love!" he said, clasping her in convulsive embrace, pressing kisses of soul-hungered passion on her trembling lips. "You don't know what you say! You don't know what I am! I've treated you like a dastard! I've been a coward. India, India, my love, I'm not fit to approach you even in friendship! I'm an escaped convict!"

CHAPTER XIX.

AN HOUR later Floyd, battling at the front, noticed that Mann stood near with haggard, blackened face and scorched clothing. No greeting passed, as both were busied with the work of keeping back the insistent flames. The night was lurid from the burning acres and stifling with sultry heat. At last the toilers felt straggling raindrops. A low, rumbling growl of thunder followed a lightning flash. Presently the drops thickened until the earth was drenched by a sharp shower accompanied by volleys of deep-toned thunder.

"Thank God," cried Floyd, "the danger's over!"

"Not yet," Mann declared. "There's danger while Nordyke's devilish cunning points the way. This fire was incendiary; I noticed Stimson's absence from the mill; the fact aroused my suspicion; I looked him up, but not until the mischief was accomplished. He had been across the bridge on a trumped-up errand for Nordyke. A half-hour afterward the south range was ablaze and running before a west wind."

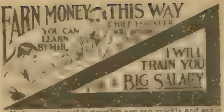
"And I," cried Floyd, "was likewise on a fool's errand." And he related his day's experience.

The two discussed the affair in all its bearings. Mann now gave his friend the true significance of his involuntary plunge from the pier. Every thought of [illegible] Nordyke and his tool was confided to the manager. One incident only of that day remained locked in his heart. No one was to know of the man and the girl imprisoned between the fire-walls, nor of their desperate fight thru furnace heat to the cool water. Neither did he confide to Floyd the dread secret revealed to India. There was work to do in bringing a pair of friends to justice; after that his identity as Number 709 would be public property.

India, who had sworn that she cared nothing for the disgrace, that she'd stay by him in spite of the world, would protect his secret with her life. But after the consummation of his self-appointed task he'd quietly give himself to justice, or, if possible, disappear. The fire was under full control and, thanks to the back-firing and timely shower, had stopped well outside of the Blair property. A heavy pall of smoke from dying embers still rose next morning from the scarred and blackened hills, but the peril was ended.

Two days after the fire Doctor Monroe came to operate on Bob Stray. He was the noted surgeon from the Bay and his light racing team showed signs of the long drives required day or night. The portly doctor himself, however, showed no symptoms of weariness. His keen gray eyes scanned his patient and Madeline with merry, kindly glance. His deep, mellow voice and large, assured manner gave instant confidence. He ate hugely of Sally's dainties and talked with Mrs. Brett of her studies. He told humorous stories at which he laughed shakingly with no abatement of enjoyment at their point. But thruout he watched Bob Stray with sharply observant eyes.

"This," he said to Madeline, after examining Bob's head, "is the least difficult of any operation in surgery. There was no need of the young man being inconvenienced a week. How long has he been in doubt of his identity?"



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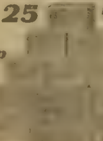

"At least two years," Mrs. Brett told him.

"Humph! Well, in two hours he'll be exactly where he left off."

In a few moments the doctor was at work. Madeline, under his direction, administered the anesthetic and assisted. Mann was at hand in case of necessity. The affair was of but a few minutes' duration. After the last stitch was taken and the bandage applied, Doctor Monroe seated himself in the pleasant front room with its white muslin curtain swaying in the slight breeze and the open door showing the fresh green of the rain-washed foliage.

"Give him nonstimulating food; keep him quiet on any pretext for a few days; send for his friends, and then let him go," was the doctor's first, last and only advice.

After Bob Stray's drug sleep was ended and consciousness came, his opened eyes regarded Madeline at his beside with drowsy wonder.

"Where am I?" he asked.

"Hush! You've been ill," Madeline told him truthfully.

"Are you the nurse?" he inquired, but his straying glance showed increased astonishment.

"Yes," she told him. "Now, no more talking; tomorrow you may ask what you will."

"You see, he doesn't know you," gleefully commented the doctor, when out of earshot. "The last two years of his life are gone. He's back at home and two years younger."

At the end of the two hours the big doctor confirmed his judgment, received the bills Bob had set aside for this purpose, and whirled off to his neglected patients.

Next morning Bob was given permission to come out to the sitting-room and lie on the wide couch. His wondering eyes stared, bewildered, at unaccustomed scenes. Floyd came into the room, but the invalid glanced up at him as at a stranger. Sally's black face, as she brought his well-laden breakfast tray, gave him a new idea.

"My folks must have sent me to the [illegible] suggested to the nurse. [illegible] necessary. I only got [illegible] I lost my senses [illegible] moved [illegible] a joke [illegible]

"That spot is a trifle sore," he mused. "I expect Dad'll fuss something dreadful about that game. He's dead set against football, anyway."

Floyd and Madeline exchanged significant glances. So that was the explanation; Bob had been injured in a football game. They dared not question him as yet; besides, Floyd was due at the mill where Mann was tallying up the yesterday's delayed score.

As the manager drove toward Agache, he met Nordyke with his sleek driving horse. The men nodded greeting, altho neither pretended mutual liking. Nordyke hated Floyd on general principles; the man represented all that was admirable, and the bookkeeper disliked him on the same grounds that the King of the Lower Regions is said to hate baptismal liquid. Floyd distrusted and abhorred the bookkeeper for reasons already set forth.

Nordyke turned eastward at the south end of the bridge, and passed rapidly over the fire-charred road along the bluff. As he surveyed the marks of devastation his face darkened with silent rage; his black eyes flashed ominously.

"The fool, the meddling fool!" he hissed.

At Blair's mill he turned east toward the Brett farm, passed it, and stopped under wide-spreading maples where a path branched from the main roadway. Here he tied his horse, and then stepped a few paces down the serpentine track.

"Why did the white-faced simpleton appoint daytime?" he muttered. "I'll end this once for all. I'm sick of the whining fool."

A step drew near, and Mrs. May with her large, fair face flushed and her eyes red with weeping, approached. Seeing her, Nordyke retreated toward his carriage and stood waiting.

"I've come in Lil's place," the woman said, in the voice of one who despairs. "I've come to ask you to marry her. You know why. Tell me, will you do right by my girl? Will you give her an honest name?"

"No," Nordyke said, with emphasis. "I won't be driven; I refuse to bargain with any one but the girl." He sprang into his carriage and gathered up the reins. "I was to see her today. This is a trap!"

"Tomorrow," urged the woman, catching the wheel's rim in convulsive grasp. "Marry her tomorrow when Elder Hawkins comes to preach!"

"Not tomorrow nor any other time," cried the man, harshly. "But I'll talk with the girl here in this place, as I agreed. Tell her to come at this hour tomorrow, but no fooling, mind! I'll not bargain with you or any of the family." He struck the horse, but the woman grasped the lines and drew it back on its haunches.

"My God, you can't mean it!" she cried. "For the sake of the mother who bore you, have mercy! Think of my child!"

Another blow of the whip sent the beast from the spot and left the frenzied woman weeping and wringing her hands.

"Lil's father'll kill him," she thought, as she slowly returned to the desolate home. "But that won't save my girl, my poor babe! My God, my God, how can we bear this grief?"

Nordyke returned to Agache by a leisurely detour around the north side of the lake. Altogether he was in an unenviable mood, nor was this condition bettered by catching sight of Mann and Floyd just leaving the village on their way to Bob Stray's sickroom. The sun was low in the west as the friends circled the bluff road and the still lake shadowed the distant hills in delicate tracery.

Bob glanced up at their entrance to the Brett sitting-room with the natural curiosity of one in a strange place. Instantly his face lighted with relief. His expression showed the gladness an alien feels at the unexpected sight of a familiar countenance.

"Clyde Manning! You here?" he exclaimed joyfully.

The scaler took the youth's proffered hand. His bowed face was a study. Floyd and Madeline listened amazed.

"Your features seem familiar," admitted the scaler. "But I can't recall either your name or where I've met you."

"No wonder," laughed the young man. "You never spoke to me before in your life, but I've seen you many a time in the bank. I was a messenger boy, but it was always Park Cutler who waited on me. My name's Jack Wylie, and my folks live on Washington avenue."

"Of, all that's wonderful!" cried Manning. "So you were a messenger boy, and came to the bank when I acted as head cashier!"

"Yes," said Jack. "And I read all about that beastly affair of your being sent up for money the president's son stole."

"What's that?" cried Manning. "The president's son! Do you mean Park Cutler?"

"Of course," affirmed Jack. "Everybody knows you let yourself be sent over the road when a word might have straightened it out. It was a shame he took so long to own up."

"I was not aware," Manning said dryly, "that Park Cutler ever owned up."

"Had to," declared Jack. "He was caught with the goods."

"Then his confession does him little credit," Manning said grimly.

"Strange you didn't know!" cried Jack. The puzzling thought occupied him some minutes. "Where are we, anyway?" he suddenly demanded. "Why is it you haven't seen the papers?"

"Jack," Manning said bending toward him and speaking gravely, "what is the last act you recall doing before you left Detroit?"

"That football match," Jack told. "It was going against us, and I worked like mad. First thing I knew I was pitched over a fellow's shoulders and struck on my head. I never came to until sundown last evening. The nurse won't let me talk, but I want to know if our chaps won that game."

The scaler hesitated, looked questioningly at Madeline for permission, then at a sign of approval he again addressed the youth with the forgotten past.

"Jack," he said kindly, "you've been unconscious longer that you suspect. After that blow on the head you must have been irresponsible for some time. You have wandered far from your city; this is some two hundred miles from Detroit. We must communicate with your family, and when you're able I'll take you back."

Jack Wylie stared at him unbelievingly; then horror filled his eyes as he realized the import of this statement.

"Go telegraph my father at once," he cried. "My mother will be frantic at my absence! They'll think I've run away!"

"Let me have the number of your house, and I'll see you hear from them by midnight," Manning told him. "I'l wait at the office until we have an answer."

He withdrew from the room at once and, leaving Floyd at the cottage to relieve Madeline, he took his own driving horse from the barn where he had left it and started on his errand.

The welcome news of his freedom from arrest gave him matter for thought. Jack Wylie's recovery had thrown wide the door of happiness. He was free from taint of crime; he was in position to ask India Blair to marry him. The future opened up a vista of untold joy. He had no regret for the past. His years of shame, of fugitive existence, had brought him India. But for his flight and hiding he would never have known this peerless woman. Before long every dweller in the settlement knew his story.

Over fifty thousand dollars of his bank's funds had disappeared. When this shortage was discovered the prosecution massed circumstantial evidence against the first cashier. Park Cutler, assistant cashier and son of the bank's president, was chief witness for the State. Byron Cutler, the father, had previously befriended Manning; he had been to the young man almost a father; therefore Manning rewarded him by sparing his guilty and perjured son.

The silence of the accused cashier told against him even more forcibly than the evidence. After a prolonged disagreement the jury reluctantly handed in a verdict of guilty, with recommendation to mercy. The judge pronounced a ten-year sentence, and shortly after this the prisoner commenced serving time in the State penitentiary. Here he was given the prison books to keep and became a trusty. Prison surveillance was not rigid; chance gave him the opportunity he wished, and he escaped. His only relative, an uncle, assisted him to leave the country. Knowing the man-hunt had spread a net over Europe, he conceived the idea of returning to his native State; it was on the principle adopted by children playing hide and seek—no one looked near the goal. His uncle was warned of his movements by a prearranged code, but the fugitive waited vainly for some communication. Finally he concluded that detectives guarded the Manning home so closely that writing was hazardous. After that he ceased to expect either letter or code signal.

The night was one of the most voluptuous of mature summer. The fading glory of sunset tinged cloud-strata as line after line floated in crimson bars to the zenith. When he came to the last declivity the lake lay outspread below, and its polished surface reflected the red of sky in exquisite coloring. Not a breath stirred the heavy foliage; perfect peace formed the dominant note of the expiring day. As he approached the Blair mill his heart thrilled with the tidings he had for the one who filled his thoughts.

"But I won't speak yet," he mused. "I'll wait until my record is cleared on the prison books. After my return from the city I'll tell her all. Till then she'll trust my honor."

Fate decreed otherwise. The one chief in his reverie was at the lakefront gazing at the shadow effect of the dreamlike landscape. She turned at the sound of wheels and came toward him. In a moment he was at her side, his glad tidings had expression in his countenance.

"I'm cleared of guilt," he said with eyes glowing. "I've been flying from a myth, from an apparition of my own formation." Then he helped her to the seat, sprang to his place, and told her the wonderful effect on his destiny of Jack Wylie's revelation.

She turned on him dark eyes flooded with love and trust, dancing with happiness, mocking him with teasing laughter.

"Oh, you foolish boy," she cried. "You noblest of nature's noblemen! To think of your keeping your—regard—from me—when I——"

Her dimpling cheeks flamed crim-

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son, her lashes drooped. Then her companion's free arm encircled her; the remaining words were unspoken. They rode in companionable silence, or talked of their future in low tones that harmonized with the dreamy quiet of the hour; then came Agache and the crowded store where Mann sent Jack's telegram and they awaited the uncertain answer.

As usual, on Saturday nights, the store was thronged with purchasers in quest of Sunday provisions. Ridman attended to various wants with practiced dispatch. He caught the suspended end of twine, skillfully wrapped it about the last package and tied it, then turned to India.

"Now, Miss Blair," he offered, "I'm ready to wait on you. What's wanted?"

"Nothing," India told him. But Ridman's sharp eyes inexplicably brought the mounting color to her face. He glanced toward the retreating shoulders of her athletic companion.

"Permit me to be the first to wish you joy," murmured the observant salesman and came from behind the counter to greet her heartily with a handclasp.

Nordyke too, read the story. His black eyes detected the girl he intended to wed among the evening's shoppers. Her radiant face told his jealous heart that she was lost to him. Hot anger welled in his calculating brain. He turned to his work and wrote down the return message clicked off for one Jack Wylie. It read:

"Will come for Jack by first train north."

"HORACE H. WYLIE."

As the bookkeeper handed the yellow envelope to Manning his face was dark with jealous rage. Stimson, slouching near, observed Nordyke from beneath bushy eyebrows, but his own expression was so hate-filled that had the operator seen the look he'd have trembled for his safety. Certainly Nordyke's tool served him from no sense of devotion.

The history of that night's homeward drive in the soft summer air among the ear-appealing sounds of a summer evening, with a band of gold reaching across the shimmering water from the queen of night is sacred to the two concerned. Never had Manning's trip over familiar miles required so long; never had India loitered so shamelessly at the gate.

When she finally entered her mothers' presence, Mrs. Blair also read the sweet message in the beloved daughter's face.

"I went for a drive," explained India.

"Yes, I know," was the response. Then, "My girl, my dear girl!" she cried, and the two were folded in close embrace.

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

* * *

A Better Place.

One evening last spring, while a certain New Yorker was putting in a week at his country place in New Hampshire, he prepared to take a ride in his motor car, expecting to remain out until late.

He therefore told his new man that he need not wait for him, instructing him when he had finished his work to lock the garage and place the key under a stone, the location of which the owner described with much exactness.

When the employer reached home after his ride he was surprised to find that the key was not in its place. When his patience had been exhausted after a fruitless search he awoke the man and received this explanation:

"Why, sir, I found a much better place for it."

* * *

GOING SKATING.

"I knew I had no business doing it," confessed the girl who likes to talk. "But Griswold is one of these masterful men, you know. A few more experiences like this one probably would do him good and tone him down to something possible! The only way really to get along with a masterful man, you know, is to chloroform and handcuff him and then tell him what you think!

"Well, Griswold dropped in to see me the other evening and incidentally to take me skating. He said the ice was great in the parks and people should get out and exercise instead of shivering over steam radiators; so would I please hurry and get on my wraps?

"He remained perfectly oblivious of the fact that I was attired most becomingly in a blue crepe de chine gown and was an ornament to any fireside. Frosting the pale damask rose upon my cheeks never saddened him a bit.

"'But, Griswold!' I stammered in horror. 'I haven't skated since I was 16! Back in the stone age! I wouldn't recognize a skate if I met it face to face! I don't even know whether you wear them on your hands or your feet! I'd disgrace you——'

"'You'd better wear a sweater under your coat,' he proceeded pleasantly. 'And don't forget low-heeled shoes!'

"'I haven't any skates!' I shrieked joyously.

"'They rent 'em!' he told me calmly. 'Hustle!'

"I've always planned that if ever I have to be hanged I'll never make any fuss about it, but meet my doom without annoying the spectators. So I got ready and we raced off to the park. Griswold told me that I'd soon pick it up and have such a lovely experience that I'd be coming out all the time. Yet I don't know any more sickening feeling than being on skates when you are scared.

"I clumped across the floor of the place where you get your skates and out to the edge of the ice, feeling just as confident and comfortable as if I were walking a tight rope a thousand feet in the air with no life net stretched below. The minute I hit the ice I naturally sat down.

"Griswold tried to be lightsome about it. He said I mustn't have such a terrible lack of confidence in myself, and why didn't I get up when he was trying to help me? I explained that I still sat on the ice while the other skaters surveyed the scene with interest, because I couldn't get up, not if a million men were helping me. Every time I tried to rise my skirt bound my knees together and my skates hacked at my ankles. To all intents and purposes I was nailed down to the surface of the lagoon and, anyhow, it was all his fault.

"Another man proffered his assistance, and as they raised me to my unwilling feet they both took my place on the ice, ker-bump! Griswold said I clutched at him and that he lost his balance, and that the other man tried to save him and met the usual fate of philanthropists.

"Then we started off toward the darkest part of the pond. I think Griswold was a trifle annoyed at the attention we attracted. It was a terrifying experience to me. Griswold kept pleading with me not to lean my whole weight on his arm and assuring me that the ice was not going to crack beneath me, so I needn't be afraid to balance my weight on my skates. I begged him to skate around and let me stand and watch him, so he darted off in outer rolls and eights and other smart effects and I was so fascinated that I never noticed what was happening to me. The ice was like glass, and instead of standing still I was sliding straight ahead toward a red light I knew meant danger.

"The more I tried to stop, the faster I went, and in a mad effort to escape that cold plunge I veered to the right and neatly telescoped an individual trying fancy steps off by himself.

"Griswold said he wouldn't have minded so much if I only had stayed where he could find me, but, after getting two policemen and a lot of skaters searching for me, he was somewhat exasperated to find me sitting on a bank with a totally strange man, exchanging afternoon tea talk, oblivious entirely of him. I pointed out that after brutally knocking a man down and having to crawl on my hands and knees to the bank to get up again, I couldn't be expected to ignore the gentleman who came to see whether I was mangled and dying. Besides, I had to apologize to him. And, moreover, he had saved my life, because if I hadn't run into him I'd have drowned in the lake by the red light, and there would have been a messy ambulance and all sorts of bother.

"Griswold said he'd rather have me drowned than forget all about himself so flagrantly, and took me home. I told him that anyhow I was the kind who bloomed best in the quiet of my own fireside rather than in a North Pole atmosphere. He said I certainly was until I could skate better than I had that night! That's the gratitude you get for freezing to death for a man!"

"But, anyhow, you don't have to go skating again," consoled her listener. "You did it on purpose!"

* * *

A "Has Been."

Little Everett was a member of the Band of Mercy Society and was proud of the membership. He wore his badge, a small star, as if it were a policeman's insignia, and was often heard reproving other boys and girls for cruel treatment of dogs and cats.

One morning, a woman of the neighborhood heard a commotion outside Everett's home, and, going to the window, was surprised to find Everett in the act of tormenting the cat.

"Why, Everett," she called, "what are you doing to that poor cat? I thought you belonged to the Band of Mercy Society."

"I did," replied the little boy, "but I lost my star."

* * *

Anything to Please.

An old woman went into the grocer's and ordered a pound of lamb for a stew, which came to 12 cents. After being served she said: "D'ye not throw something in wi' it?"

"Oh, yis," replied the grocer; "if ye wait a minute a'll throw in a sack o' taties an' a barrel o' apples an' a bushel o' turnips an' a box o' oranges! An'," he shouted, as the old woman flounced out of the store, "when a'm not busy a'll throw in the horse and cart! If ye're not satisfied then, come back for the shop."

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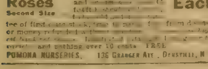

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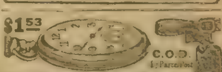

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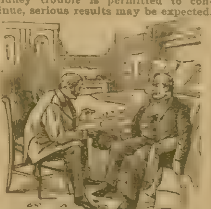
THOUSANDS HAVE KIDNEY TROUBLE AND DON'T KNOW IT

Weak and unhealthy kidneys cause so much sickness and suffering and when through neglect or other causes, kidney trouble is permitted to continue, serious results may be expected.



Your other organs may need attention—but your kidneys should have attention first because their work is most important.

If you feel that your kidneys are the cause of your sickness or run down condition commence taking Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, the great kidney, liver and bladder remedy, because if it proves to be the remedy you need and your kidneys begin to improve they will help all the other organs to health.

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Most people do not realize the alarming increase and remarkable prevalency of kidney disease. While kidney disorders are among the most common diseases that prevail, they are almost the last recognized by patients, who usually content themselves with doctoring the effects, while the original disease constantly undermines the system.

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Thousands of people have testified that the mild and immediate effect of Swamp-Root, the great kidney, liver and bladder remedy, is soon realized and that it stands the highest for its remarkable results in the most distressing cases.

Symptoms of Kidney Trouble.

Swamp-Root is not recommended for everything but if you suffer from annoying bladder troubles, frequently passing water night and day, smarting or irritation in passing, brick-dust or sediment, headache, backache, lame back, dizziness, poor digestion, sleeplessness, nervousness, heart disturbance due to bad kidney trouble, skin eruptions from bad blood, neuralgia, rheumatism, lumbago, bloating, irritability, wornout feeling, lack of ambition, may be loss of flesh or sallow complexion, kidney trouble in its worst form may be stealing upon you.

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If you are already convinced that Swamp-Root is what you need, you can purchase the regular fifty-cent and one-dollar size bottles at all drug stores.

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SPECIAL NOTE—You may obtain a sample size bottle of Swamp-Root by enclosing ten cents to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y. This gives you the opportunity to prove the remarkable merit of this medicine. They will also send you a book of valuable information, containing many of the thousands of grateful letters received from men and women who say they found Swamp-Root to be just the remedy needed in kidney, liver and bladder troubles. The value and success of Swamp-Root are so well known that our readers are advised to send for a sample size bottle. Address Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y. Be sure to say you read this offer in the Chicago Ledger

Only the Blues.

"De man dat chases rainbows," said Uncle Eben, "generally finds dat he has failed to ketch up wif any of de colors 'cepting de blues."

His Path to Success.

"To succeed one must keep in close touch with the public."

"That certainly is essential for a pickpocket."

A REMARKABLE LEAP

In the Middle Class.

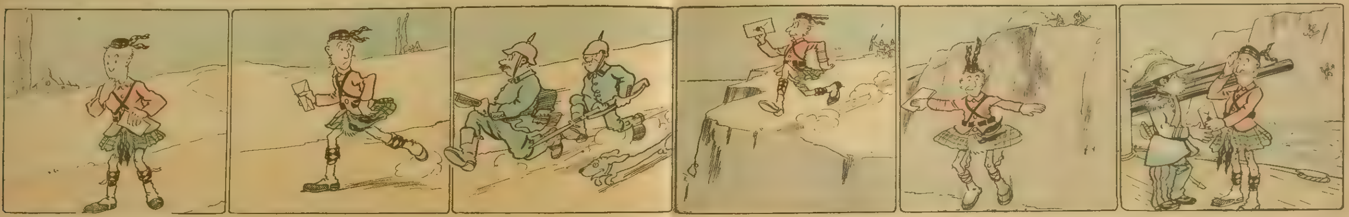
Wifey—"What is the social scale that the novels talk so much about?"

Hubby—"That is where they weigh money"

Sporting Spirit.

Kind Old Lady "Have a cookie, little boy?"

Fresh Youngster "Sure thing' I'm willing to try anything once." Puck



Sandy "Hoot! That sounds like German soldiers coming, an' I have nae gun or ammunition!

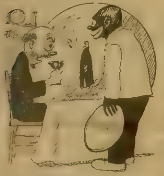
"An' I got this important dispatch t' deliver t' the admiral of the fleet!"

"Quick, Hans, and ve vill surround dot long-legged Scotisher on der cliff vere he can't get avay!

"Halt, there, you red-headed, spindle-shanked Highland checker-board! Vait! Stood still! Surrender!"

Sandy—"Na, ye sourkraut chewers, I'm stoppin' for no mon! Germans invented the Zeppelin but we Scots produced kilts."

Admiral—"Sandy, yer a wonder! I see that yer German pursuers have tumbled over the cliff! It's a needed bath they'll be havin'! Come below with me an' we'll have a wee drop o' nosepaint!"



"Look here, waiter, do you remember what I ordered?"

"Yes, sah; yo' ordered spring chicken and '74 port, sah'"

"Exactly! And you've brought me spring port and '74 chicken!"

❦

His Offer.

Excited Individual "See here, Mr. Bangs, you are a scoundrel of the first water. When I bought that hoss I supposed I was getting a good sound animal, but he's spavined and blind, and got the heaves. Now, I want to know what you're going to do about it?"

Bangs—"Something ought to be done, that's a fact"

Excited Individual—"Well, I should say there had '

Bangs "Well, tomorrow I'll give you the name of a good veterinary surgeon; it's a shame to have that horse suffer in that way."

Never Again.

Not long ago Congressman Rodenberg sent to a constituent some horticultural seeds, ranging in variety from flowers to vegetables. At their first subsequent meeting the recipient remarked:

"I had a narrow escape with those pesky seeds. It was my fault, but I could not resist a chance to play a practical joke on a friend, a very attractive widow. I changed the envelopes containing the flower seeds, and put in the flower envelopes lettuce, radish, and onion seeds, telling her that they were furnished by the Agricultural Department and were strictly A1 I impressed her with the efforts of the Government to supply the best, and of the vast sums expended for that purpose, until she was persuaded to give them special attention. I was then called away from town and did not see her for six weeks. Returning, I called on the lady and casually inquired about the seeds.

"She answered, 'To tell you the truth, I haven't been out to the cemetery since they were planted You said they were so fine that I concluded to plant them on my husband's grave '

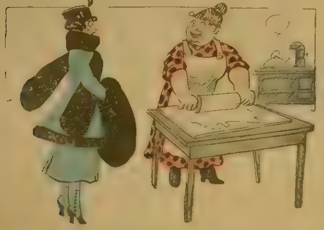
"I made a quick getaway and meandered to the cemetery, where I found a fresh crop of onions, lettuce and radishes growing upon the grave. I pulled them up, and you bet I've sworn off joking widows with substitute flower seeds."

❦

Handicapped.

"I notice you masticate your food thoroly. Are you a disciple of Dr. Fletcher?'

"No," said the moody man who was disposing of an omelette in a dining car. "I was in such a hurry to catch the train this morning that I came away from home and forgot my teeth."



"Did any one call while I was out, Bridget?'

Bridget—"Yes, mum. Tim Callahan called, an' sure he was as glad to find yez out as he was to foind me in."

Bunkoed Again.

They met at the crossroads

"What is Sile looking so glum about these days?" asked the farmer.

"Gosh! He thinks he's been bunkoed again," drawled the railsplitter.

"Do tell!"

"Yeas. By heck, he paid a dollar for a bottle of stuff that was advertised to make you live 200 years, an' now he's discovered that some one has predicted that the world will come to an end this year."

❦

The Busy Bee.

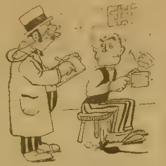
Holding a glass of clear honey in his right hand, father observed impressively:

"It cost the little bees many a weary trip to fill this with sweetness from the flowers"

Little Laura, who had been listening closely, exclaimed with great earnestness:

"Wouldn't it have been too bad if one of them had dropped the glass!"—Judge

❦



Lawyer—"Can you prove an alibi?"

Prisoner—"I dunno; I've only got $80

❦

Grandpa Gave It Up.

Old Mr Brompton is a very clever man; he has enough degrees after his name to supply a platoon of scientists Yet the other day his little granddaughter utterly confounded him.

"Grandpa," said she, "I saw something so funny running across the kitchen floor without any legs. What do you think it was?"

Grandpa thought and thought, but at last he had to give it up.

"What was it?" he asked.

"Water!" replied the little lady triumphantly.

❦

The Only One Who Answered.

Uncle George—"What are you crying about, Tommy?"

Tommy—"Teacher whipped me because I was the only one able to answer a question in school today."

Uncle George (indignantly)—"This is an outrage, my boy! I'll see that teacher myself. What was the question?"

Tommy (sobbing)—"Who put the tack in teacher's chair?

Some Amusement.

"I'm surprised to hear that lecturers do so well in Boston."

"Why so?"

"I thought Boston people were well posted on every subject. What have they to learn from a lecture?"

"Maybe they go to see how well the lecturer is posted.'

To the Point.

"I wish I were as rich as that man," sighed he.

"No, you don't," retorted she, "or you'd work as hard as he does."

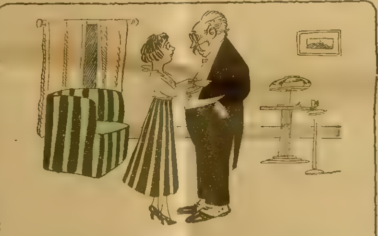
His Method.

"You've been driving for years and never had an accident, you say?"

"That's true."

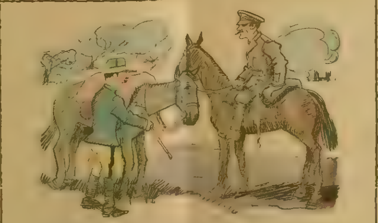
"How have you managed it?"

"Well, I make my rule, 'I will look out for the other fellow,' instead of insisting on my rights and making him look out for me."



The Father—"Want to marry Clarence Littleneck, do you? He's got nothing to furnish a flat with."

The Daughter—"He's starting in to accumulate, father. He already has a mandolin and a lovely manicure set."



Englishman (condoling French officer whose horse has broken his knees)—"Well, he was on his last legs, anyway. poor old chap!"

French Officer—"Mais, non, monsieur! It vos on his first legs that he fall."

FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING.

Jim Wombat was a chap be9
The kind that men call superfine.

He was the sort that girls adore.
Or have appeared to hereto4.

We deal in figures. Never mind,
Jib Wombat was the proper kind

He was, in fact, we wish to state,
The sort of man to emul8

❦

Cheats In All Trades.

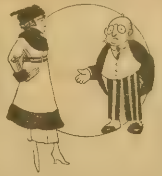
Young Housekeeper (timidly)—"Isn't fourteen cents rather high for turkey? I am sure that the price across the way is only thirteen."

Butcher—"With the feet on?"

Housekeeper—"No-o, I think the feet are cut off"

Butcher (with a superior smile)—"I thought so. When we sell a turkey, ma'am, we sell it feet and all.

❦



Patient—"But doctor you are not asking $5 for merely taking a cinder out of my eye?"

Specialist—"No. My charge is for removing a foreign substance from the cornea"

❦

Considerate.

When Bobbie went to see his grandmother he was much interested in whatever went on in the kitchen. One day she said to him: "I'm going to make you a nice little pie in a saucer all for yourself. Don't you think I'm pretty good to take so much trouble?"

Bobbie pondered. "Grandma," he said at length, "mother told me not to be a bother, and if it's going to be any trouble you can just as well make my pie reg'lar size."

■

Plentiful.

The old man was sitting in front of his lonely cabin in the Tennessee mountains. "Them roads is vile with automobyles," he remarked as the visitor drew rein on the deeply rutted road.

"Why, do many come up here?" asked the surprised horseman.

"Many? Why, stranger, I don't believe there air a week but what one goes by," said the old man.—Life.

Under the Wheel.

A great sensation was created the other day at a station just previous to the starting of the morning express for London. The guard was about to start the train when a fussy and fat old gentleman trotted up to him and said

"Wait a minute, will you, please while I

"Impossible, sir," said the guard, putting the whistle to his lips

"But you must wait!" cried the old gentleman, excitedly. "There's a man's leg under the wheel'

"Good gracious! Where is he? inquired the horror-stricken guard "Hold up there!

He hurried after the old gentleman, while a couple of porters jumped down onto the line amid great excitement After a short search one of the porters handed up a rush basket containing a large leg of mutton

"Thank you," said the old gentleman

"What do you mean, sir?" roared the guard. "You said—

"I said a man's leg was under the wheel, and so it was I paid for this leg, and if it isn't mine I should like to know to whom it belongs

Then the train moved on

❦

A Truthful Boy.

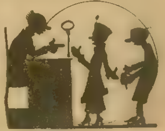
A farmer who was blessed with a son with an engaging frankness of speech sent him to the local miller's one day

The lad got hold of the miller and submitted for his inspection a handful of wheat.

The miller studied the wheat attentively, and then said to the boy:

"How much more has your father got of this?

"He ain't got no more like it" the boy answered He's been all mornin' pickin' that out



Magistrate—"And what were you and your husband quarreling about last night?"

Mrs Brown He said he was as good as me and I said so was I I told him he was no man and he said neither was I"

❦

She Was Successful.

A [illegible] told of the daughter of William Jennings Bryan

When a young girl she started to school one morning, and after a desperate run for a street car finally succeeded in catching it. As she took her seat she gasped

Well, I'm glad one of the family can run for something and get it"

■

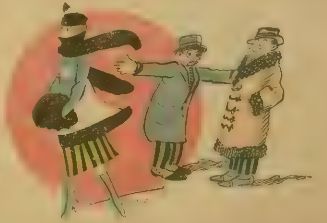
A Cruel Jest.

She—"But why did you have a boy to deliver our wedding invitations instead of sending them by post?"

Jack—"Couldn't afford to take any chances

She—"Chances of what?"

Jack—"Being arrested. Don't you know it is unlawful to send lottery tickets thru the post?"



Percy—"She didn't remember me! And only last summer we were engaged!"

Reggy—"That's just like a woman, old chap—they never can remember a joke!"

Mazeppa of the Sea

Or, The Brig of Mystery

By Victor Ardmore

[Copyright 1915 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 51, December 18. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN Eveleth had seen preparations progressing properly he again faced the darkness and the shouting men. Questions were on his lips, but it was the unseen man who first made himself heard.

"I am in big trouble here. Mutineers have seized the vessel, but have gone, leaving me wholly alone here, chained to masthead. I beg that you will get me out of this."

"Courage!" Eveleth called back. "We are coming to, and will lower a boat at once. Depend upon us we will have you out of trouble in a short time. Are you under headway?"

"Yes. A few sails are on the masts, and I move slowly."

"Day is dawning, and I already make out your hull vaguely, but keep up your shouting. Don't let us miss you. Shout!"

"Ay, ay!" was the cheerful response, accompanied by a laugh. "You can depend upon me to yell like a steam-whistle. Fact is, I'm personally interested."

Eveleth threw up his hands.

"For a man starved for two weeks that fellow is a marvel!" he exclaimed.

The light came rapidly now. Previously the fog had held it back, but the mist lifted fast, and the derelict brig and everything else came into view. In [illegible] the rescue boat had gone ten fathoms [illegible] Eveleth, sitting in the stern, urged his men on. This time, desire to help the modern Mazeppa was to be more than a matter of the mind.

Back on the deck of the Laugh of Day a group stood by the rail, and the mate, taking a brief backward look, saw Eleanor leaning outward as if her wishes would transport her body to the Swiftstep.

"Lively, lads!" cried Eveleth. "We want him quick! Think how you would feel if you hadn't tasted food or water for two weeks."

"I'm a-wondering just how long he has been dead," said an old salt, seriously. "Chiefly, tho, I likes this affair because it will prove what I've always contended, and that is that witchcraft will keep men moving long after they stop breathing."

"Avast!" growled a messmate, irritably. "Belay that or somebody will want to know just when you died."

Eveleth missed this talk, for he looked only at the man in the top. He was not a believer in witchcraft, but, somehow, he had an uneasy feeling that, after all, the man might vanish before his eyes.

Mazeppa had fallen silent, but seemed to be busy with something. Then he puffed a wreath of smoke from his mouth and waved a cigar.

"Prime Key West!" he commented happily. "I don't often smoke before breakfast, but this is an exceptional occasion."

Eveleth returned words, but what they were he did not know. Being rattled, he was again considering the question of how the other man happened to be alive.

It was a short pull, and the boat was soon under the Swiftstep's counter. A sailor in the bow caught and held hard, and then, noticing that a ladder of rope was dangling, left by the mutineers, the boat's painter was made fast, and Eveleth started up the side. Rising higher his head came on a line with the bulwark rail. He took another step and came to a sudden halt. He stood face to face with a monkey.

"Don't be scared!" came from the top. "He's harmless as a fly. That is Major, my body servant."

An idea began to take root in Eveleth's mind, but he forced himself to give attention chiefly to immediate events, so he took another step. The monkey had been eying him with mild interest, mixed with some timidity, but when he saw that the brig was to be invaded he scurried away. Another moment and he was running nimbly up the shrouds, treading the ratlines with sure feet. Almost as soon as the mate was on the deck, Major was in the top, and Mazeppa was fondling his head.

Losing no time, Eveleth mounted the same way, and was at another stage of the mystery. He was facing a young man who certainly held himself erect, tho there were odd lines in his face and a haggard look in general that belied his pose of strength. Plainly, he was one who had lived thru hardships, but was not untouched by them.

The rescuer, however, then and there gave his friendship to his fellow men. His fine, muscular figure and manly, attractive face made its mark, and the two young men clasped hands in what was to be a lifelong alliance of good will.

"By George! but I'm glad to see you!" exclaimed Irad Warner.

"And I'd rather meet you than any other man living!" Eveleth replied warmly. "We've been watching for you for a week, and now we've got you. Your story has gone all over the Caribbean and to South America, and the ships that wanted to rescue you, but couldn't, have reported you to us and others."

"Had a mutiny, the men got drunk and made me fast here," said Warner, more gravely. "I'm sound aloft and alow, but—hang it! I banker for a decent sleep in a decent place."

"But tell me, by all that's miraculous, how you've managed to keep from starving?"

Warner turned to the attentive monkey.

"Come here, Major!" he directed.

The animal came and stood by Mazeppa's side, blinking solemnly upward as he received the caresses from the friendly hand.

"Here is the answer. Major has been my body servant, partner in adversity, and sharer in eatables. He has brought me food and water. Eh, Major, good old boy?"

Warner's face rippled with good will, but Major maintained the stoical exterior peculiar to his kind. Only his eyes told the tale of reciprocal affection.

"Now," Warner pursued, "if you'll have one of your men bring a file or something I'll get out of this bed-quilt. You may not believe it, but a chain anchor fall isn't a prime bed cover."

Eveleth started and wasted no more time. Having shouted to his men, it was made clear that one of them had formerly been a blacksmith. The carpenter's tool-box was found and put at his disposal, and he soon knocked the chain off the waist of the captive. Warner went down the shrouds unaided, tho not with great sailorly agility, giving further evidence that hardship had weakened him. Major kept at his head with close eagerness of motion.

"Now for a square meal," Warner continued. "Major has set an abundant table, but variety has been lacking. I'm a temperate man, but there is no other medicine better than brandy, wisely used. I feel the need of bracing a trifle."

He mixed a draught in the cabin, looking about him with curiosity.

"I'm all that's left of the officers," he said meditatively. "In a way this is a place of horrors, for murder was done on board, but Captain Brodwin and Mate Shovally brought it on themselves. Too bad, all around! Say, I'm still second mate of this brig, and you have a big ship. Can you spare me a crew to take brig and cargo to the nearest port, and so save them?"

"No doubt of that. Come aboard and see my captain."

Eveleth took a step and then wheeled suddenly upon his companion.

"Say," he cried, "there's somebody else in the Laugh of Day you may feel like talking with. Don't let me flurry you in your weakness of body, but Miss Eleanor Goldsmith is there."

Warner stared blankly.

"Eleanor!" he muttered doubtfully.

"Nobody else, and she's grieving her heart out for you. You see, we picked up the mutineers' boat, only one man being alive, and he lived barely long enough to tell what he could. We knew you were chained to the mast, but have been long in finding you. Come along and let Miss Goldsmith tell you the rest."

"I'm agreeable," Warner answered, smiling happily. "I never suspected she was near, but—well, never mind. Here, Major, keep us company!"

The monkey blinked and started, but when he saw it was to be a journey away from the brig, he took alarm and fled below.

"Poor old fellow!" said the rescued man. "The mutiny shook his courage badly, and he's had a fondness for hiding ever since. He will be all right here, if you leave one of your men while I talk with your captain briefly. Somehow, I don't feel like hiding, myself. Yes, I'll go to your ship and see—and see your captain."

CHAPTER XV.

AN HOUR later, with Mate Barton and a few men in charge of the Swiftstep and both vessels under way for Antigua, Irad Warner told his story in the cabin of the Laugh of Day. He had been fed and newly clothed, and with Eleanor close beside him and an attentive group to listen, he explained what had been so mysterious.

"Until lately I was second mate in the ship Gay Rider, the master of which was Captain Osborn, but we were wrecked on Afez Reef and that berth was lost. Osborn and the first mate took passage in the Silver Wing for home, but I thought I would work my way, and signed with my old rank with the brig Swiftstep, bound from Rio to New Orleans.

"Unfortunately, both captain and first mate fell sick with fever, and new officers took their places, namely, Captain Brodwin and Mate Shovally. Before we were a full day out I learned that the skipper was a drunkard and both men were brutal wretches.

"The crew was average, being ignorant but well-meaning men who might have been handled easily by decent officers, but not only had Brodwin shipped miserable food for them, but he and Shovally misused them, driving them unnecessarily and often beating them for nothing.

"Finally we ran into a gale and had a hard fight to weather it, tho all hands did their best. The time came when it eased off, and I went to my berth for sleep, knowing the worst of the blow was over with.

"The awakening was astonishing to me. The men hammered at my door, got me out into the cabin, and told me they had been so maltreated an hour before by Brodwin and Shovally that they had impulsively fallen upon them, murdered them, and flung them into the sea. They told me that I had always used them well, and that they would not harm me, but that they were going to take the yawl and abandon the brig.

"I don't know what they would have done with me had they kept sober—that was a big problem to me, and might possibly have been to them—but they got drunk. Finding the captain's private stock of rum, and it was abundant, they filled themselves with it, became uproarious, and raced all over the vessel, singing, playing pranks, and generally acting like madmen. The rum was in their heads.

"Just before they lowered the yawl somebody made a suggestion as to me, and it was carried out with crazy enthusiasm. They took me to the top, used the chain anchor fall and made me fast to the masthead. I reasoned with them, and begged hard, but I had more to argue with than reasonable men—and I failed to convince the rum. Briefly, I was left in the top, and they pulled away in the yawl. I never saw them again.

"When I found myself alone I took heed to my situation. The brig was under way, the sails having been left as they were when we finished with the gale, a single-reefed lower fore-topsail, jib, and two-reefed mainsail. The wheel was lashed hard down. Unless another gale or a bad squall sprung up I saw

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no reason why she shouldn't keep afloat all right.

"Day dawned and I looked for sails without seeing any. It was an empty sea, as far as my vision traveled. The Swiftstep had come up into the wind and was making perhaps six knots, while she didn't yaw enough to worry me.

"Perhaps you will be surprised, but it was not until afternoon that I gave thought to what was to be the vital question of my predicament. What was I to eat, and how was I to get it? Frankly, that worried me, for I didn't know when I should be rescued. I had tried my best to get loose. I wrestled with that confounded chain, tried to break it, to open a link, and so on, and found that it was too much for my efforts. I certainly was fast, and what was I to do?

"I began to feel desperately hungry, my situation spurring my appetite on, and I had nothing to eat. What was I to do?

"I was considering this with serious mind when, as I looked down at the deck, I saw a small head at the companionway. It was Major.

"Now, Major had been in the old Gay Rider all the while I was there. He was a Malori coast monkey, the property of Captain Osborn, and he had the intelligence peculiar to his kind born on that coast. Osborn had taught him many tricks, and among them was waiting upon his master in a way half-joke and partly to develop him. Osborn called him his body servant and had taught him to understand certain words, among which were 'grub,' 'cigars,' 'water,' 'book,' 'cushion' and the like. Being bidden, he would get these things at any time and bring to his master, tho in some of these cases, like 'grub,' for instance, he made comical choices, bringing anything eatable he could get hold of, cooked or uncooked.

"From the beginning in the Gay Rider I had liked Major vastly, and he had taken to me readily until Captain Osborn declared he liked me as well as he did the skipper. Major would bring things to me when directed, and I had directed him time and again, finding great pleasure in his mixture of keenness and blunders.

"When Osborn sailed, as I've told you, he left the monkey in my care, the captain of the Swiftstep agreeing to it willingly. The change in officers brought Brodwin to the brig, but he took to Major with favorable attention that was surprising in so rough a man, finding much amusement in my little friend. Because of this, Major had a good berth in the Swiftstep.

"The mutiny had scared the monkey so he had hidden somewhere below, and his peek from the companion was my first sight of him after that, but there he was. Hope flashed upon me and I called him. He came hesitatingly at first, but finally with eagerness, climbing up the ratlines as he had climbed hundreds of times before, and was soon with me in the top.

"I petted him a long while, and he showed doglike affection, but my mind was on business, and I finally came to the point.

"'Grub, Major,' I said. 'Grub!'

"The first order did. He turned, went down the shrouds composedly and disappeared below. Can you imagine the eagerness with which I, a man already hungry, waited for the result? Major had what Captain Osborn called his 'fetch-and-carry outfit,' which included a small rattan basket and a quart tin pail, each having a handle, and he kept them in a certain place, using them when given commands. Moreover, he had constantly frequented the galley and the cook's storeroom, and knew where to find things.

"In ten minutes he reappeared with his basket, and the motion of the brig—the sea had largely calmed down—the motion, I say, did not prevent him from footing it up the ratlines, tho he had a hard task of it with his burden.

"In the basket were cooked salt beef and a ship biscuit, and I ate with keen appetite. I have forgotten to say that the chain was around my waist only.

"Eating increased my thirst, and I gave another order. It was for water, and Major started down obediently. We had a large cask in use at that time, equipped with a faucet, and as the monkey had always been able to manipulate the faucet in the past I knew he could then. When he came on deck with his pail I fear I fell into a fever. Would he be able to get up the shrouds without spilling the precious liquid? Well, he did, coming slowly and with wonderful skill, and I had my drink. Major had taken the first steps in saving me from death.

"Later in the day I tried another vague hope. I wanted to get clear of that infernal top, but had nothing to accomplish my wishes. I tried the monkey again, using such words as 'carpenter's chest,' 'saw,' 'file,' 'hammer,' and so on, but these things fell on ears that did not comprehend. Major had never been taught those words. Day after day I tried this hopeless effort, and always with the same result.

"Major made many breaks that would have been amusing at another time, bringing me food I could not possibly eat, such as uncooked salt beef, but I had enough. The brig was wretchedly found for the foremast hands, but Brodwin had taken in luxuries for himself, oranges, bananas and the like, and, fortunately, the latter were in all stages of ripening, and the monkey knew where certain of them were kept in the dark, slowly getting right to eat.

"The cooked beef was soon gone, but ship biscuits, bananas and oranges held out finely. I've had my fill of them, and my strength has stood by me surprisingly.

"It was not until the second day that I bethought myself to order cigars, but, being directed, Major brought them. He also brought a cushion—everything wanted but tools to free me.

"That was a remarkable voyage of the brig, for we've been about all over the middle of the Caribbean. The Swiftstep had sail enough to keep her under way, and it was of such a nature that she felt the stir of every wind, always answering it.

"When the wind shifted she shifted, and as a result I've been carried to all points of the compass, back and forth, hither and yon. We rode out one lively squall, but generally the weather has been respectable, so we met with no mishaps. Still, the frequency of fogs has been trying to me.

"I spoke several vessels, shouting a set phrase I had carefully studied out, but got no help, either night or fog or something else preventing. Once in full daylight, I passed so near a s[illegible] sloop that I read her name on the [illegible] —LaNoche—and rescue seemed sure, but when I shouted for help captain and crew laughed loudly and ignored me. The fellows were unfeeling, but stupidity may have played a part, for the captain looked to be a dull-witted man.

"My zigzag journey is over with, and I've come out of it well, tho I admit I'm a bit worn out. I had length of chain sufficient so I could sit down when I wished, and lie down for sleep, but I've seen better beds than the platform built in a brig's top.

"I can easily understand why nobody ever reported seeing Major. After the mutiny he was timid, and kept below most of the time, and, as luck had it, was never on deck or aloft when I was sighted by vessels. But, friends, make no mistake as to Major. He fed me well, and with skill and patience, and he preserved my life. I should have starved long ago but for him, and you can guess what place he has in my heart. I shall ask Captain Osborn to present him to me, and Major will have the best of everything while he and I live.

"Well, I admit that it has been a trying experience, but great good fortune has been mixed in with the bad, and it's over with. Now I look forward to peace and happiness."

The narrator, ending his story, turned his head and looked at Eleanor

* * * *

Some days later Andrew Jenkinson was in a private room in the Red Anchor Inn, in Antigua. The Laugh of Day had made that port without further adventure, and he was waiting for a vessel in which he had booked passage for England. He had failed wholly in the plans that had taken him on board Captain Foskett's ship, but, with habitual philosophy, had accepted discomfiture. He was walking the room when the door opened. An unannounced

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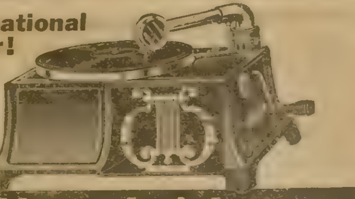

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visitor was there. It was James Hadlock.

For some seconds the two stood looking at each other fixedly, neither showing signs of recognition. Their regard was cold, but not hostile. Then the younger man spoke quietly.

"I heard you were here and have come for a few words. I reached Antigua half an hour ago, accompanied by Pettley and the other searchers."

"Bringing in the derelict Swiftstep?" asked Jenkinson, deliberately.

"As that craft accompanied the Laugh of Day to this port, you know we did not bring her in. We did, however, find another derelict and fetch her to Antigua."

"You are keen for salvage money, I see."

"I shall claim nothing, but give all to Pettley and his men. I do not care to make money out of the Caribbean. I've seen too much of its waters already. I leave port soon, but called for a word with you."

"Proceed!" said Mr. Jenkinson, calmly.

"I want to set you right as to myself. At various times you have reminded me that, in my boyhood, you taught me to pick a pocket, forge a check, and crack a crib. You did, but I've never made a cent out of it, nor tried to. Sir, I once had a mother, and her blood is in my veins. I do not aspire to steal nor to hoodwink my fellow men. In my later youth you sent me to school, for which I thank you, but I was many years free from your influence, so I had nothing to send me astray when my character was forming."

"Impressive!" remarked the older man.

"When you came to me and asked me to sail with you in the Laugh of Day, I agreed willingly, for reasons to be explained later, but I never intended to help you to unlawful gains aboard. One thing I did when on board that should be explained. At your bidding I falsely stated that I heard a call for help off the ship's beam, so you could have time to rifle the captain's safe. My reason for doing it was simple."

"Undoubtedly, since you are a simple man."

"You had already once poked around the staterooms, hunting in the clothing of other passengers not then in use. When you wanted to open the safe I knew you would do it, anyhow, but that you wanted nothing further than a certain document. I agreed to divert attention so you would not be detected and a scandal brought about, so I claimed to hear a hail that nobody else heard."

"Admirable!"

"Now, as to why I was in the Laugh of Day. You have wondered who had possession of that document which was the last needed link to prove that Miss Eleanor Goldsmith was heiress to a large fortune. It was I, for I had it all the while. It was intrusted to me in South America, to deliver to lawyers in New Orleans who represent Miss Goldsmith's family. As you wished to steal that paper, you will readily see that I did not care to tell you I had it."

All this while the two men had been looking each other in the eyes, coldly calm, no ripple of emotion showing with either, but the revelation had been so unexpected that Jenkinson started slightly and additional color appeared in his face.

"James," he said evenly, "I see that while you are still a tadpole when considering the interests of yourself and your friends, you are a full-grown frog in some ways."

"Lastly, I was never and am not a candidate for the affections of either Miss Goldsmith or Miss Allen. They will find better men. Now; I sail from Antigua within an hour. We are hardly likely to meet again at any time."

"Hardly!" Jenkinson coincided.

"Good-by, sir!"

"Good-by, Mr. Hadlock!"

Both voices were composed. The caller turned and left the room. Then Jenkinson began to pace the floor. Five minutes he meditated, and once he paused at the table and stirred with his finger a sheet of paper on which he had marked down some notes for a plan to victimize an Englishman out of his money while crossing the ocean, but the scheme did not, for the moment, demand hasty consideration. Resuming his pacing he analyzed the situation and then put his thoughts into words.

"I once had a son Jimmy, but he died young!"

At the same time, in another hotel in the town, a group of persons were in friendly association. They were Captain Foskett, Mr. Allen, Martha, Eleanor, Eveleth, and Irad Warner. Miss Prince was not there. She was looking for Jenkinson, anxious to collect cash from him, but she never saw him again. Before she located him on shore he had sailed for England.

Near Warner was Major. The monkey was at his ease, and accepted attentions generally, but he hung close to Mazeppa of the sea, clearly finding in him the only person really worthy of serious consideration. Possibly he realized that he was to have a lifelong home with the Warner family, and it numbered only one then. There were, however, indications that if numbers increased Major would fit himself to the changes with the facility of the brig Swiftstep.

It was certain that the cargo of the Laugh of Day would be sold in Antigua, and the vessel, herself, together with the brig, ultimately taken back to Maine. Just then the group gave no heed to these matters, having already planned to sail for the United States in an English ship.

Warner was not yet dropped as a man of remarkable experiences, nor likely to be. The tale of the derelict was to be told in many ports, tho nobody else could see that strange voyage so vividly as the man who had long been chained to the masthead and so surprisingly furnished with food.

The End.

* * *

Changed His Plea.

"The average young man," began Courtney Hopestill, adjusting his glasses more firmly on his nose.

"There are no average young men," replied Miss Magoozleum.

"The average young man is an average young man," replied Courtney, didactically. "When you say there are no average young men you state that which is manifestly not so and is not susceptible of proof."

"I can prove that there are no average young men."

"To the satisfaction of an unprejudiced judge?"

"I can prove it to your satisfaction and you are prejudiced."

"I beg you to believe, Miss Magoozleum, that I, while interested in this discussion, in which you take such an utterly untenable position—if you will forgive me for saying so—am not prejudiced. I am always open to conviction."

"Are you an average young man?"

"Without any intention to flatter myself I think I may safely claim that I am not. I think I may truthfully claim to be above the average."

"There you have it."

"I don't quite grasp your meaning, Miss Magoozleum; what have I?"

"The universal complaint, and the proof of which I spoke."

"Your language appears to me to be somewhat difficult to understand. Your statements are somewhat involved——"

"Listen, Reggy——"

"Courtney, Miss Magoozleum."

"Courtney, then. Listen, and I'll tell you about it in words of one syllable. I have long searched for an average young man, but failed to find one. I have asked a dozen or more of the boys if they were average young men, and one and all have indignantly denied the charge."

"But, why, may I ask, have you sought so assiduously for an average young man?"

"As soon as I find an average young man I am going to marry him, if he doesn't climb a tree, or jump the fence. The contemplation of a long life spent with a highbrow gives me the jimmies."

"Er—Miss Magoozleum, Jennie—may I be permitted to change my plea—and—er—to plead guilty to being an average young man?"

"The court will take your plea—here let go, and stop that! That sort of action proves you guilty of being an average young man."

* * *

Early Wisdom.

Report by a high school girl of a lecture on "Phases of Human Life—Youth, Manhood and Age:"

"In youth we look forward to the wicked things we will do when we grow up—this is the state of innocence. In manhood we do the wicked things of which we thought in our youth—this is called the prime of life. In old age we are sorry for the wicked things we did in manhood—this is the time of our dotage."

A STRANGE CASE HERE IN ILLINOIS.

Creal Springs, Williamson Co., Ill.—"My malady was somewhat a curious one, called by my family physician [illegible] of the [illegible]. I would suffer from smothering with severe coughing. The attacks would come upon me after I would go to bed or upon rising in the morning, but I am glad to say that after taking five bottles of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery I feel myself completely cured and I recommend this remedy to all.

"I wish you the success you certainly deserve."—Mrs. S. S. Gill, Creal Springs, Williamson Co., Ill.

It's bad blood that makes your liver sluggish and the same bad blood causes your stomach muscles to lose their elasticity and become flabby and weak and that means indigestion.

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Take it as directed and it will stimulate the liver and put it into healthy action and search out impure and poisonous matter throughout the system and eliminate it through the natural channels.

It will furnish you with the kind of blood that increases energy and ambition, that puts the entire body in such perfect physical condition that brain or muscles know no fatigue.

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Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets regulate and invigorate stomach, liver and bowels. Sugar-coated, tiny granules.

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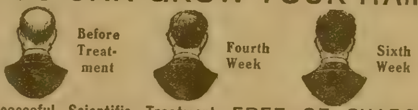

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If you suffer [illegible] Write at once for our illustrated book.

"The Triumph of Science Over Baldness."
FREE TREATMENT.

We want to prove to you at our own risk that the Calvacura Hair Treatment stops the falling of the hair; destroys dandruff and eczema [illegible]

[illegible]
UNION LABORATORY, [illegible] UNION, N. Y.
Please find [illegible] Calvacura [illegible] The Triumph of Science Over Baldness. [illegible]

The Foot and Mouth Disease Can Affect Any Man, Woman or Child.

It can be spread among the human race through unboiled milk, cream, butter or cheese. The first symptoms appear several days after infection.

Microbes so small that they have never been seen even with the best microscopes and probably never will be seen, are one of the causes of the foot-and-mouth disease, and have brought greater loss to our farmers than any other one calamity in years.

Our book, "The Foot-and-Mouth Disease," by Maximilian Herzog, M. D., LL. D., covers every phase of the cause, effect, loss and effort to check, and the great cost it has been to our Government.

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Another booklet by Dr. Herzog explains the full meaning and value of the different methods of curing and preventing this costly plague. It gives the reasons why the much advertised "cures" are fakes. It tells the only known methods of preventing and curing hog cholera.

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When you find yourself a-pinin'
  Fur a slow, sunshiny day,
An' a chance to throw a line in
  Where the shadows are at play,
You forget ambitious dreamin'
  An' the hard an' selfish wish;
All the plannin' an' the schemin'
  Make no difference to the fish

They don't ask you how you voted,
  When they give your line a look,
Tho you're humble and unnoted,
  That won't keep 'em from the hook
An' the deal is square you're gettin'
  Where the waters gently swish,
All the arguments an' frettin'
  Make no difference to the fish

* * *

POOR, HELPLESS MAN.

When the Kays moved into their new apartment, John arranged his wearing apparel in the capacious closet off his room with a sense of commodious comfort.

"This seems like living," he said to himself, as he hung each separate garment on its own hook. "A fellow can't be well groomed when his clothes are all jammed together into a two-by-four space."

He beamed as he viewed the neat row of hangers that swung free and uncrowded in the light and airy closet. Indeed, he was so pleased with the sight of his wardrobe bestowed in such orderly fashion that he really hated to tear himself away from his new quarters to go to business. The moment he returned home late in the afternoon he opened his closet door to assure himself that it was as luxurious as he had thought, and he was surprised to see a long fur cloak hanging in the particular place where he had left his winter overcoat. He was just in the act of taking the interloper down indignantly when his sister knocked at his door.

"I just wished to tell you, John, that as you have so much room in your closet, I thought you wouldn't mind if I hung my fur coat there temporarily."

"Oh, all right, Claribel." He hastily restored it to the hook. "Say, isn't this a bully place for my duds?"

"Yes, indeed, all you need is some clothes. Your outfit looks a little inadequate."

"Nonsense, I've got everything I need, and it's certainly a satisfaction to have a decent place to keep things. I've often thought I'd rather have a place to put things than things to put."

The next night when John went into his closet to get his evening clothes he was startled by the sight of a ghostlike figure hanging beside his swallowtail which was now suspended from the same hook where his frock coat hung. He pulled aside the shrouding white cover, and beheld what looked to him at first like a shapeless tangle of chiffon, lace and roses, but which in a moment he recognized as one of his sister's dancing frocks.

"Well, of all the unmitigated nerve!" he ejaculated. He moved it into the corner of the closet, leaving vacant the space originally allotted to his dress coat.

A few days later he was astonished to find a strange-looking pair of trousers dangling from his trouser rack.

"Great Scot, what are these? Of all the weird pantaloons I ever saw these are the most grotesque," he remarked, as he took them down and surveyed them. "Riding breeches, I suppose, but my word—hey, there, that you, Claribel?" he called, hearing a light step by his door. "Did my tailor send me these pants? They have come to the wrong house. I couldn't get one leg in them."

"Why, John, don't be such a silly! Don't you see, they're—why they're part of my riding habit. That's all. I haven't a rack like yours in my closet, and just brought them in here so that they'll keep in shape. Put them back, please, where you found them!"

John reinstated them in their former position and observed while he did so that a long-tailed coat of the same material had been added to the contents of his closet.

"That's the top part of the riding suit, I suppose," he said.

"Yes, and I don't want it to get all wrinkled up in my closet. You needn't whistle in that provoking way! You have loads of room here if you would only systematize things more."

"You have the real system," remarked John, but Claribel was too far down the hall to answer.

Sunday morning while his sister was at church John took down two evening dresses, one fur cloak, one motor wrap, one golf skirt, one riding suit, one muslin frock, one rain coat, one mackinaw jacket and one crepe negligee and laid them, as he thought, carefully, on his sister's bed. Then he painstakingly rearranged his own wardrobe, which had been gradually converging toward the narrow end of his closet. When he again saw his garments neatly disposed, each hanging separate and alone in plenty of space, he sighed with satisfaction, and went out for a walk before dinner. It was not until after that meal that he went to his room. But when he did he was astonished to see that feminine raiment had once more taken possession of his closet. He called his sister sternly.

"Now, look here, Claribel, I think——"

"I'll tell you what I think, John Kay," she quickly interrupted, "I think you are perfectly horrid to heap all my nicest things on my bed the way you did in a regular mess. Of course I put them all back, and if you aren't nicer I won't let you keep any of your things in that closet at all! You'll just have to put them in the hall closet with the linen."

"Well, I like that!" breathed John, but his sister had marched away with dignity. "Talk about an ouster! Next thing she'll be dispossessing me."

* * *

AS IT SEEMED.

"Well, young lady," inquired Dot's father, "how did you enjoy the Literary Circle? Did you sit very quiet all the time the ladies were here?"

"She was very good," her mother answered for her. "At first I was a little uncertain about the wisdom of letting her stay in when the club met here, but she seemed really interested and didn't disturb any one."

"Then, let's hear about it," Dot's father suggested. "What did they tell about?"

"First there was that tall lady," Dot began eagerly. "She said she'd had a month to do all her work, but I can tell you, daddy, she didn't know her lesson even then. She read it off a paper kind of fast, so that nobody'd see she didn't know it."

"But, of course, mother had a good lesson?"

"Not even mother," Dot said regretfully. "She read hers out of a book, a little piece at a time, and then she'd say, 'Isn't that lovely?' And all the other ladies would say: 'Oh, yes, perfectly lovely!' And she didn't have to learn anything off."

"I read selections from Jeremy Taylor," Dot's mother hastened to explain. "It was a book I got from the library."

"And then there was the new lady," Dot went on. "She told all about what she meant, but that was all. What's a parle, daddy?"

"Give it up."

"Well, there must be something like it, 'cause this lady said it was dissolved."

"She said," Dot's mother spoke up, "that parliament was dissolved. You know, it was about Cromwell's time."

"That's it," Dot said, much relieved. "The parle she meant was dissolved by the king. And the king was fighting a lot and they chopped off his head, and it was too bad, because he had a nice lady for a wife and his children cried. The lady said she had a lot to say about the things they did when they chopped off his head, but little pitchers had big ears and she wouldn't. I went and looked at all our pitchers and there ain't a one that has any ears at all. Does it hurt to have your head cut off?"

"I shouldn't care to have it done often," Dot's father said cautiously. "The rest of you might be lonesome without the head, you know."

"And a man was in a tower and he died there, daddy. How do you suppose he couldn't get out?"

"And didn't anybody tell why he couldn't?"

"There was Mrs. Drake," Dot said thoughtfully. "She said the tower was a sad place, that's all. She didn't seem to know. Anyhow, she didn't talk about that. She said she was going to talk about the great people of the day. I listened awful hard, but she said an awful lot about men named John and Oliver and Charles, and things like that, but I didn't hear a single word about George Washington or even President Wilson. I don't see how you could hardly talk about great people and not say something about George Washington. Do you, Daddy?"

"I certainly don't."

"I guess she hadn't studied, either," Dot decided with a sigh. "I was awful disappointed because they didn't know their lessons. There was one lady, she kept looking in books before she said anything, and I guess she had five books with her, but there wasn't a picture in one. It was all about customers, but she didn't say what kind of store it was."

"Manners and customs," Dot's mother interpolated. "That was Mrs. Lathrop."

"And the queen was like a dog," Dot said calmly, "for throwing bones around on the floor. I thought I'd like queens, but I don't like that kind. I guess maybe the lady didn't know that queen herself. She didn't look like a lady that knew queens and things like that. And in one place she couldn't even read."

"It was Spanish quoted from some document."

"Why, mother," Dot protested, "she said it was from a king."

"Well, I suppose you are glad you were at this meeting," Dot's father said. "But, really, if you don't like them any better than that I guess it won't pay you to go to any more of the meetings."

"Oh, but, daddy," Dot cried excitedly, "you just don't know!"

"What then?"

"It's afterward," Dot explained, smacking her lips. "They have a real for true tea party out in the dining-room—and ice cream!"

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I am putting on the market a large-eye, cable-temple spectacle, the frame of which is made of composition non-gold metal that looks like gold, although there is not one cent's worth of gold in them. The hooks that go around the ears are made of soft twisted cable wire (just exactly like the high-priced spectacles now on the market) which will not hurt the most tender ears. I want you to send for these large-eye, cable-temple, non-gold spectacles of mine.

As soon as you get them I want you to put the first pair on your eyes—the reading and sewing spectacles—sit down in front of the open hearth one of these cold wintry nights, and you'll be agreeably surprised to discover that you can again read the very finest print in your bible, thread the smallest-eyed needle and do the finest kind of embroidery and crocheting with them on, and do it all night long without any headaches or eye-pains, and with as much ease and comfort as you ever did in your life.

THEY'LL ENABLE YOU
TO READ THE FINEST PRINT AND
SHOOT A BIRD OFF THE TALLEST TREE—

If you like to go out hunting occasionally, put on the second pair—the distance and shooting spectacles—shoulder your gun and go out into the woods some bright and early morning, and you'll be greatly delighted to find that they help you wonderfully [illegible] sighting your gun and taking aim at your game. And in the evening, when the shadows are gathering in the dusk, you'll easily be able to distinguish a horse from a cow out in the pasture at the greatest distance and as far as you can see with them on, and this even if your eyes are so very weak that you cannot even read the largest headlines in this paper.

But the third pair—the protection pair of spectacles—is the best of them all. With this pair of protection spectacles on your eyes you will be able to work around in your kitchen and do your cooking in front of a red-hot stove, go out into the field and do your plowing, or go out driving when the snow is on the ground, and they will prevent you from contracting those eye troubles usually caused by heat, dust, grit and dirt, and keep your eyes in good condition while doing your work.

Now Don't Take My Word For It

I am going to send these three pairs of spectacles home to you at once, all charges prepaid, so that you can try them out yourself for reading, sewing, hunting, driving, indoors, outdoors, anywhere, everywhere, and anyway.

Can you get a squarer deal than this anywhere?

Did you ever hear of a fairer or squarer proposition in which you are offered

FREE 3 pairs of large-eye, cable-temple spectacles to fit the whole family

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His Strange Revenge.

(Continued From Page 2.)

He was smiling queerly as Hartridge finished.

"You're the only friend I have left, Jefferson." Hartridge grasped the weak, thin hand of the man on the bed. "I don't want you to die. You kept me from being a murderer. You've made a real human out of me. I want you to live and forgive me and help me start all over again."

Then the waters in Jefferson's soul gave way in a mad, churning torrent. The flood gates of his sleeping passion broke loose. He flung Hartridge's hand from him, and his lip curled in scorn.

"Forgive you? Do you think you could ever make up to me what I have suffered thru you? It was my story that brought you before the grand jury. I wanted you here with me, so that I could work on your mind and torture you with my kindness. I kept you from murdering the guard, not because I wanted to save you from the chair, but because I wanted you to live and suffer. I've fought against death, because I knew that your will would give way and force you to come to me and confess. Now I'm going out satisfied."

He fell back on the pillow. Horrified, Hartridge stared at him. Then a smile, happy as a sleeping baby's came into Jefferson's eyes, and he turned his face to the wall and went out—satisfied.

* * *

MERELY FATE.

"Excuse me!" said the young man, making a profound bow, as he met the extremely pretty girl in a deserted part of the avenue.

The pretty girl flushed and regarded him coldly. "What for?" she demanded flatly.

The young man gazed at her apologetically. "Why," he told her, "when I departed from your house last evening—somewhat hastily, I own, due to my emotion—you ordered me never to come near you again. I merely wished to point out that the present occasion is due to no fault of mine. Tho I beg pardon for approaching you, the fact is it was entirely unintentional!"

"Well!" said the pretty girl, chin in the air, "I don't see why meeting me should cause you sufficient agony to draw forth all this explanation! I'm sorry the sight of me affects you so disagreeably!"

"It does!" agreed the young man, instantly. "Always when I see you the most unaccountable thrill pervades me—and anything unaccountable is disagreeable in a way, I suppose, isn't it? I want to make sure, tho, before we part, that it is quite clear to you that fate alone led to this meeting. I wouldn't for the world have you think ——"

"Oh, don't worry!" interrupted the young woman, frigidly. "Nothing would ever make me fancy you would go out of your way one foot for the pleasure of meeting me—after the things you said last night! I am sure I have no wish to detain you."

"My time is yours," insisted the young man politely. "Misunderstandings are such miserable affairs and when people will have no future chance to clear them up, as in our case, it is well to do so instantly. I am glad that you understand about my simply chancing to pass along this way, not dreaming you had chosen the same street!"

"I understand perfectly!" insisted the pretty girl. "It would be quite beyond you to put yourself out in the least to see me!"

The young man regarded her mournfully. He sighed. "I hope I'm a gentleman," he said. "After being told by a lady never to look at her again, wouldn't it be positively rude to do otherwise, no matter what my feelings were? Of course, I might be dying to see her—and again I might not. That would make no difference in the face of her orders. Naturally I couldn't go against them!"

The pretty girl bit her lip and frowned. "Of course, it's nothing to me," she said, "but just as a matter of personal curiosity I'd like to know whether you don't think that if a man cared enough for a girl he—he'd pay no attention to orders or anything else?"

The young man looked shocked. "Why, Marie—pardon—Miss Jellicks—you don't grasp the first principle of devotion and—er—all that! His not to question why, his but to do or die—in other words, he wouldn't stop to think what he wanted at all—he would just do as the girl told him. Of course, I mean in a situation like this one, where everything is over between us."

"Well!" she flashed. "I must say I don't think much of such a regular jellyfish affection!"

"Do you mean," began the young man, in great surprise, "that you didn't mean what you said last night——"

Certainly not!" stormed the young woman. "Of course I meant it! How dare you assume I ever wanted to see you again? I am in a terrible hurry. Good-by!"

"Good-by!" echoed the young man, conversationally. "Well, that's just what I thought. No, I said to myself, I couldn't dream of doing such a thing. Marie distinctly said she hated men, and I wasn't to approach her again, so—"

"Then you did think of walking in this direction on the chance of meeting me!" triumphantly cried the pretty girl. "I knew it!"

"Why, I shouldn't have dared!" protested the young man, earnestly.

"Well, didn't you?" she asked a bit doubtfully.

The young man coughed and turned around facing the direction in which she was going. "This question really must be cleared up," he murmured. "It may take some time, so I'd better walk along with you——"

"Oh, my goodness," said the pretty girl, "come along! I knew that's what you'd come for when I met you!"

* * *

His Decision.

"Business must have gone very well today," volunteered old Mrs. Thriftie, hanging fondly over her son's easy chair.

"What—eh—oh, yes; business was splendid to—now what have you got me saying, mother? Business was wretched today!"

"But something has surely gone well with you?"

"Something has gone exceedingly well, mother. I have decided to get married."

"Why have you kept it secret?"

"I haven't kept anything secret, mother. I did not decide until today."

"Who is she?"

"If you had said, 'Which is she?' I could have come nearer answering. It is to be either Florence of Alice Halstead. I would also be considering their sister, but that she is already married."

"Those Halstead girls right down there on the next block? Oh, you cannot be serious. They are so frivolous, so flighty. You've said it yourself."

"I wronged them. They did impress me as silly, giggling, rattle-brained kids; but I saw them at the railway station today, and they changed my opinion of them. A train came in and a woman was brought from it into the station on a stretcher. A man in cheap and patched clothing walked beside the stretcher and carried in his arms a very young baby, which looked as if it might have inherited some of the illness of its mother; its little face was wrinkled and emaciated and pitiful. It looked to be a hundred years old in suffering and——"

"Oh, Philip!"

"Yes, and the stretcher was no sooner at rest than out of the great indifferent throng in the station the two Halstead girls and their married sister sifted themselves. In spite of the richness of her close-fitting skirt the married sister went down to her knees beside the stretcher and slipped her arm beneath the head of the ailing woman, while Alice rushed away for a glass of water, and Florence took the suffering baby from the arms of its father and dug up a nursing bottle and a can of milk from somewhere in his luggage, and rushed away to goodness knows where and got the bottle sterilized and filled with nourishment——"

"Did they do all that, Philip! And for some one whom they did not know?"

"Yes! Some country doctor had ordered the woman to the city for medical treatment, and the husband and father had brought her without making a single arrangement for her reception; but we—they—the girls looked after everything; called an ambulance, arranged to have the woman taken to a sanitarium. They thought of everything except themselves, missed their train and most certainly bagged their skirts at the knee——"

"And what did you do?"

"Who, me? Absolutely nothing except to arrange for the care of the baby during the illness of the mother."

"That was nothing, of course. I am all at sea, Philip. I have always thought no girl on earth was good enough for you, and here all at once come three girls good enough for the best man that ever lived. Have you no preference?"

"None at all, mother, dear; but as one of them is married, and as Florence wears an engagement ring, I may marry Alice, if she'll let me."

* * *

Fable of a Fairy.

Once upon a time there was a good little girl.

And this good little girl asked her mother if she could go and play in the woods, and her mother said yes.

So she went to play in the woods.

And she was walking along and walking along, and what do you think she met? A fairy! And she was awfully surprised to meet a fairy, so she said to the fairy:

"Where do you come from?"

And the fairy said:

"This is where I live."

And the little girl said:

"I never heard about any fairies living in these woods."

And the fairy said:

"No, because nobody ever saw me here before. But you are a good little girl, so I let you see me."

And the good little girl said:

"How do you manage to be seen by nobody, even tho they walk right past you every day?"

And the fairy said:

"I lend them money."

* * *

The Possibility.

"Not long ago," says a Washington lawyer, "I attended a trial in Baltimore, during the course of which there was summoned as a witness a youthful physician.

"It was natural, of course, that counsel for the other side should, in cross-examination, seize the occasion to utter certain sarcastic remarks touching the knowledge and skill of so young a doctor.

"'Are you,' demanded the lawyer, 'entirely familiar with the symptoms of concussion of the brain?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'Then,' continued the lawyer, 'I should like to ask your opinion of a hypothetical case. Were my learned friend, Mr. Reed, and myself to bang our heads together, should we get concussion of the brain?'

"'Mr. Reed might,' smiled the youthful physician."

* * *

Sympathy.

A gentleman traveling on horseback not long, ago came upon an Irishman who was fencing in a most barren and desolate piece of land.

"What are you fencing in that lot for, Pat?" said he. "A herd of cows would starve to death on that land."

"And shure, your honor, wasn't I fencing it to keep the poor bastes out of it!"

* * *

Wanted It Himself.

A man took his wife to a doctor, who put a thermometer into her mouth and told her to keep her mouth shut for two or three minutes. When departing the man tapped the doctor on the shoulder and said:

"Doctor, what will you take for that thing? I never saw my wife keep her mouth shut so long before."

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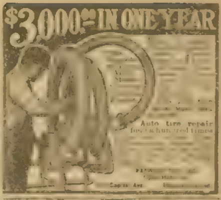

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The Get There Club

Or, Motor Boat Boys Afloat

By St. George Rathborne

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CHAPTER XIV.

THEY soon arrived close to where the fishing boat was anchored, not more than a dozen yards from the rocky shore of the island.

"Any luck?" Perk asked, as the two motor boats slowly drew near, being urged on against the sluggish current by the slowest possible working of their engines.

"Took a-holt a while back, but seemed tuh quit; and we're thinkin' some of droppin' down tuh 'nother place we knows on," replied the man in the boat, who had a barefooted boy for company.

"Is this island the one they call Deadman's?" Perk went on, waving his hand in the direction of the nearby shore.

"Yep, jest what it be, stranger," the native returned affably.

"Have you been ashore this morning?" the motor boat boy continued.

Man and boy exchanged glances, and then both shook their heads.

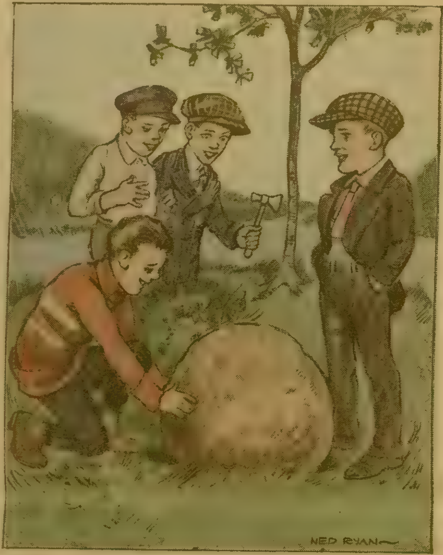
"I never onct put a foot ashore thar, fo' a fact, stranger," the older fisherman went on to declare; "an' if harf I've heard 'bout the snakes they say lives on it be true, yuh couldn't hire me to sleep thar. We kim up at daybreak from a mile down stream, 'case the fishin' is right smart good thisaways gin'rally."

Perk had learned what he wished to know; and all of them were glad to see that the boy in the bow of the rough-looking boat was already beginning to tug at the anchor, which, when raised, proved to be just a big stone, shaped so that a rope would hold well if tied around the middle.

They saw the two fishers start downstream; but before the pair had passed from sight, Red had in his usual impetuous way jumped ashore; which bold act must have rather astonished the natives, after the story about snakes swarming on the island, which might, and again might not, be true.

Immediately the four boys landed, a search for the lost camp hatchet was begun. Remembering that Billie claimed to have left the same thrust into a tree, they began to scrutinize every sort of tree they could find. That is Dumpling, Bob and Red did; but as for Perk, he was wise enough to remember that the canoeists had spent at least one night on the island, and hence he kept on the lookout for signs of a recent camp-fire.

When he presently ran across ashes that looked fairly fresh, he decided that the camp hatchet ought to be close by; and so it was, for almost the very first tree Perk cast his eyes on revealed the object of his search.



"Will we ever be able to dig her out?" asked Dumpling.

"All right, fellows; I've found it!" he called out; and this brought the rest hurrying to his side, where the trophy was duly passed around, and commented on.

"Now, while the sun is shining so fine, let's get a few pictures of the island, with three of our crowd in the same, and one fellow holding up the hatchet," Perk suggested.

"That's right," added Red, "because you never can count on having the sky free of clouds when you want to take a picture. I've been fooled many's the time, myself. But here, you ought to be grippin' that same trophy, Perk. Let me take the first snapshot of the three of you."

So it was arranged that the motor boats would show in a corner of the picture; also the log that projected out over the water, and mentioned by Billie Langhorn as something he would easily recognize if he ever saw it in a snapshot. And after Red had done his duty, Perk made him join the other two, while he proceeded to take another view.

"Now, even if it does cloud up we've got all the evidence needed," the leader of the expedition observed; "and the next thing is to find that meteor."

That meant another hunt, and all of them started in with more or less enthusiasm, altho when Perk warned them to keep an eye out for snakes, Dumpling hesitated a little, and called back:

"Do you really and truly believe there's heaps of snakes here on the island, Perk?"

"Well, it seems that the natives around here think so," replied the other boy, "but we haven't seen a sign of one so far; and Billie, who camped here, didn't mention such a thing. So p'raps some fellow long ago, who'd been drinking pretty hard, may have spent a night on the island, and thought he saw the squirming things around him all the time; so he told about it, and that's the way it came by that reputation. If there were snakes they'd like as not be of the harmless water varieties. But all the same, Dumpling, it pays to watch out."

"Sure, I will, Perk!" bravely asserted the other; but however good his intentions may have been, it was not five minutes later when Dumpling was heard to give a loud yell that startled the rest, who hurried toward the spot, half fearing that he had run foul of some monster serpent that was threatening to devour him.

Instead they found the fat chum sitting there, rubbing his head, with a rueful look on his round face.

"I was looking so hard at something over there on the left," he explained, "that honest truth, I never saw that pesky old hump right in front of me, till I tripped and fell over the same."

Perk gave one look, and then shouted at the top of his voice.

"Well, would you ever believe it?" he said, as soon as he could recover his voice, and point at the object over which the clumsy Dumpling had fallen. "Some are born great, others achieve greatness, and yet a few just tumble over it."

"If he ain't just stumbled up against the meteor, and didn't know it!" gasped Bob, staring hard at the bulky object.

"W-what!" exclaimed Dumpling, also turning his eyes for the first time on the cause of his fall. "That rusty old thing a meteor? Why, all I ever saw shone like everything, and looked like stars when they rushed thru the air!"

At that the other boys burst into another shout.

"Well, this is a fragment of a meteor, all right," Perk declared. "When it dropped here it was hissing hot from its passage thru the air, which burning of the oxygen makes the bright light Dumpling speaks about. It didn't sink in deep because there are so many rocks here, with only a little earth. And you c'n see where Billie and Geoff worked, trying to dig it out; but they didn't have a spade like we've got; and besides, they soon saw it would be twice too heavy to get in a canoe, so they quit."

"Will we ever be able to dig her out?" asked Dumpling, as he handled the queer, dingy-looking mass of fused metal, and looked a bit proud over the consciousness of having after all been the one to make the important discovery, even if it was by accident; the main thing to take note of was that he had done it, just as he had waked Red up on the preceding night, in time to frighten the robbers away.

"I reckon we will," Perk replied, after he had gone all around the meteor, and made a few calculations. "The thing that bothers me most is about getting it aboard Old Reliable. It must weigh hundreds of pounds."

"You said Billie figured most a ton," Bob interrupted.

"Oh! well, Billie is given to stretching things some, you remember," Perk warned him. "But let's get busy, Bob, you know where we put that spade and pick, so if you don't mind stepping over to the boats, please get them."

Once the tools arrived, Perk, who had taken off his coat, started in with the handy pick to dig around the fragment of a "shooting star," such as Dumpling remembered having watched many a time speeding across the darkened sky.

When he admitted to being a bit winded, Red quickly spelled him, while Bob made use of the spade to throw out the loosened dirt. Even Dumpling wanted to say he had done his part toward unearthing that wonderful metal messenger from the heavens above; and for a very short time actually swung the pick, altho Red warned the others to back off, and give him all sorts of room, for he was rather wild in his efforts to strike a given spot.

When noon came they had made such good progress that the meteor lay wholly exposed; and the next thing to do was to bring forward the block and tackle, so that it might be drawn toward the boats.

They sat down and had lunch, for Perk told them they would be lucky if they succeeded in getting their prize aboard by late in the afternoon, so that it seemed likely they must pass the night there. Dumpling promised to get out some tackle and try for a mess of toothsome river fish, if so be they managed to finish their job in time. Perk knew just how to go about the business, it appeared; and the others were only too willing to obey what he ordered; so that the meteor was finally harnessed to the tackle, and things were ready for the first tug.

To save time and trouble a sloping channel had been opened on the side of the pit toward the boats; and up this they meant to drag the meteoric stone. It turned out that Dumpling was a very valuable hand at this sort of thing, for altho fat and clumsy, he possessed considerable strength in that chubby frame of his; and the others were surprised to find how much better things moved

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when he came and took hold with them.

So the object of their care was dragged out of the bed it had made for itself at the time it fell from unknown space, probably with a hiss and a roar. Encouraged by the share of success that had thus far met their efforts, the boys changed the block and tackle to another tree, and once more started to heave. In this fashion, by slow degrees, the meteor made the journey to the boats. These latter had been brought as close to the spot as possible, in order to save some of the hard pull.

"Well, here it is down to the landing, and the next thing is how will we ever lift that heavy old thing aboard?" Bob wanted to know, as he wiped the beads of perspiration from his forehead, and rested after the last pull.

Perk went and got their own ax, and put that belonging to Billie into the hand of Red, at the same time explaining his plan of campaign.

"We want to cut down a lot of these stout saplings and make a gang plank up which we can drag the thing, and get it aboard the Old Reliable," he said, tersely.

"Hurrah! but don't it take our Perk to think up a way, tho?" cried Dumpling. "Why, I'd never have got an idea like that in a thousand years."

"You never spoke truer words, Dumpling," asserted Red, a little maliciously.

"Well, we don't want to stand here talking too long," Perk told them; "because this is going to be a big job; and the sooner it's over with the better I'll be pleased. Come along, Red, and we'll cut down those saplings, and trim the same; the other boys can lug them over here."

In half an hour they had fashioned a stout "gang plank," as Perk called it, leading from just in front of the heavy meteor up over the gunwale of his boat. Then the tackle was again adjusted, and they commenced heaving.

Just as Perk had said, it proved to be a tremendous task; but they were both lusty and willing; and moreover, once they got the prize started they did not allow it to go back an inch. So gradually it neared the top, and finally, much to the gratification of everybody, it toppled gently over, and was aboard, without listing the boat very much; and Perk knew that after it had been fastened exactly in the center there would be no trouble, save that Old Reliable would take several inches more water than on her last trip.

"Bully for us!" cried Dumpling, as they all sat down to get their breath and rest up some, before thinking of anything else; "we're going to make that Billie Langhorn look small when we get back home, let me tell you, boys."

CHAPTER XV.

IT WAS so near evening when they finally managed to get the meteor aboard, that, as Perk said, there was no use of them thinking of dropping downstream, because they would surely have to tie up somewhere for the coming night; and a better place than alongside the island could hardly be found.

"If it's got such a bad name," Bob remarked, as Dumpling started with his fishing tackle for the log that hung out over the river, having been careful to capture a number of fine fat worms while they were digging the meteor out; "chances are we won't be bothered tonight with any more visitors like came before."

"They'd better not!" chuckled Red; "that is, unless they like being peppered and salted good and hard; because that little gun of mine does shoot to beat the band."

Pretty soon a shout from Dumpling announced that he was striking some sort of luck; and when Perk wandered down to join him later on he found that the diligent one had already secured quite a nice string of edible fish, which would afford them a treat for supper. Perk immediately set to work to get them ready, tho Dumpling said that was part of his business.

"Well," Perk told him, "seems to me you're already doing more than your share in getting all these fat fish; and it'd be a shame if you had to stop just to clean the same, while the rest of us have nothing on our hands."

Bob had a fire burning briskly when the two came in just before dark. And when he and Red saw the dozen fish they warmly praised Dumpling, telling him he was surely the champion angler.

"After this we know who to look to when we're fish hungry," Red told him; 'so you see you've gone and put your foot in it, my boy."

"Oh! that's all right," Dumpling readily replied. "I'm that fond of fishing I'd drop anything else to handle a pole and line."

"Not much you would!" Bob called out. "Nothing under the sun would ever make you drop eating, after once you started, 'less it was an earthquake; and even then I reckon you'd grab up all the grub you could before you ran."

The fish turned out to be very tasty, and the boys wondered why they had not thought to try for a mess before. When lost in the swamp they might have amused themselves fishing, as they tied up evenings; but no one had seemed to think about such a thing; possibly because of the burden that was on their minds.

And sure enough, they passed a peaceful night, not a single thing happening to disturb their sleep. Red kept his gun handy, but found no need to use it; and even Dumpling managed to sleep on his own side of the boat, so that he did not awaken his comrade by rolling over on him.

"Why should I?" he demanded, when his attention was called to this fact by Red in the morning. "There wasn't any need of it, you see. Now, if any robbers had come nosin' around, you'd 'a' found how quick I'd waked you up. Huh! what's the use botherin' when everything's serene?"

And Red hardly knew whether Dumpling was joking, or really believed he had a good right to claim a part of the credit for frightening off the two rascals on the other night; so he did the wisest thing possible, and stopped talking.

They started down the Garraway after a while, and made such good progress, with the current in their favor, that just after noon they reached the very place where they had come out of the great Dismal Swamp.

Perk was so confident that this time he would carry them thru without any useless wandering about, that he could hardly wait for another morning before making a start. And on putting the question up to his mates it was decided to push right along, even Dumpling falling in with the idea when he saw that he was in a minority, so that it became unanimous.

"I did hope we wouldn't have to spend another night in that awful place," he admitted; "but what's the difference, after all? If we sleep aboard the boats, no bear or snakes or anything else can bother us. And one thing sure, we don't need to lie awake thinking robbers are going to clean us out."

And so they did not even wait to bother cooking a warm lunch, but made up their minds to have a cold "snack" as they moved along, in this way saving much time and trouble.

It soon became apparent that Perk was keeping his word, for he declined to be drawn into attempting several half-way promising channels that seemed to head due north, persisting to his plan of continuing along the outer edge for a time. When evening drew near they had made great progress, so that all of them were confident save Dumpling, who frankly confessed that all parts of the swamp looked alike to him, and "he didn't know where he was at."

All the same they spent a pleasant night; and having accomplished so much of the task that had been their aim when first starting out, the boys felt they had good reason to feel satisfied. Perk took pains to keep as careful a record of his locations as possible; and by this time he believed he had the lay of the swamp pretty well mapped out in his mind. He did not boast in the least, because he knew there was always a chance that he might have blundered, and in that case they would be compelled again to cruise this way and that, until some opening came along, it might be in one day's time, and perhaps six.

In the morning they started ahead. Perk led the way in Old Reliable; and as they had put Red on his good behavior for the balance of the trip, he was having no trouble at all with his engine, which the other boys between themselves thought was a pretty good indication that most of the fault lay with Red, and not any balkiness on the part of his motor.

There was considerable uneasiness on the part of Dumpling and perhaps Bob as the morning wore away and thus far they had not found any indication that the northern border of the swamp was at hand. Red seemed to feel more real confidence in the ultimate success of the pilot, perhaps because he observed things more closely than either of the others.

And then, at about three o'clock, when Dumpling was beginning to shake his head rather dolefully at the prospect of still another night passed amidst such dreary surroundings, he was electrified to hear Perk sing out cheerily:

"It's all over but the shouting, fellows!"

"How's that, Perk?" demanded Bob, eagerly, while the others also paid strict attention, wild to hear what had happened.

"Why, here's one of the branches I broke when we were coming in," replied the skipper of the Old Reliable, as he pointed to some object close at hand; "and from the way it's bent I happen to know it was done early in the start, because afterwards I changed my scheme of doing it."

"Oh! then that means we're getting near the edge, doesn't it?" Dumpling cried in an ecstasy of delight; and he looked as tho ready to hug himself, or Red.

"Here, you keep back, and don't fling your arms around me!" the latter bawled lustily, seeing the threatening demonstration. "I know you feel great, but that's no reason you had ought to grab me, when I'm tending to my engine. But Perk, sure we're all tickled half to death to hear you say that. Why, we might even try and get up home tonight."

"Nothing doing," said Perk, decisively, thereupon putting his foot down on this speed scheme of Red's. "Why, we've only used up less than half of our time allowance so far, and what would be the use hurrying like wildfire? Better just have another jolly night of it; and then in the morning start for old Boonton. Besides, Red, you know yourself it'd be nicer to get there in broad daylight."

"Guess you're right, Perk, as you nearly always are," admitted the other; and so the matter was settled.

It took them another hour to get out of the swamp, tho they knew all the time that they were following the course of the long abandoned canal; so that even Dumpling had no further fears.

Starting up the Patucket, they covered quite a few miles before night came on. As good a place as they could run across was selected for the last camp; and here Dumpling fairly outdid himself in getting up a great feast; for he said that they had a right to "celebrate," having conquered over all difficulties, and emerged from the swamp victors, carrying the spoils home with them. Dumpling was always ready to "celebrate" in this way.

In the morning their homeward voyage was resumed; and about noon they drew up at the place where the motor boats were kept, an old boathouse which the boys had hired for a very small sum.

Billie Langhorn and his friend Geoff were astonished when they were summoned down to the river by Bob, to see with their own eyes the camp hatchet that had been recovered, as well as the great mass of molten metal called a meteor, and which they remembered so well. Later on, when Perk's films were developed, and a series of really excellent pictures printed, the whole story was revealed. They recognized many places in the swamp as spots where they had met up with troubles of their own, and freely confessed that Perk had carried out his promise to the letter.

Dumpling's father was greatly pleased with that rusty-looking old lump of stuff from the island, which he declared was as fine a meteor as he had ever seen. Not only did he repay the motor boat boys for all the expense they had been put to, but insisted on placing a hundred dollars in their bank account, in order to give them another outing at some future date; which the chums voted was a generous thing for Mr. Merriwether to do.

When Bob saw the picture of himself clinging wildly to the back of that galloping, frightened black bear he was nearly overpowered. It came out finely, and was, when enlarged, an object of great amusement to the boys, as well as a source of horror to Bob's mother, who doubtless often dreamed after that

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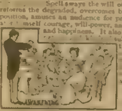

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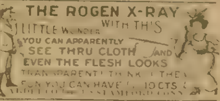

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of her darling boy being kidnaped by all sorts of wild animals.

Some time later Perk happened to have an errand over at Colonel Jenkins' place on the Jamestown road, and of course he ran across little Black Sile there, who grinned broadly at meeting his benefactor of the swamp again. He told Perk that just as the boys had predicted, when the Colonel read that laughable description of the breaking of the "China Lady," he was so full of laugh that he even forgot to scold the boy. As there might be no telling what would have happened to Sile only for his running across the motor boat boys, no wonder he looked upon Perk as his "bestest friend," and tried to show his gratitude by actually kissing the boy's hand at parting, much to Perk's embarrassment.

Of course the four chums are looking forward to another trip with their boats; and as Red found that he had no trouble with his engine so long as he avoided meddling with it, the lesson might prove to bé a profitable one to him.

Dumpling says he hopes so, because it took away from the pleasure of the trip to be constantly expecting something to happen, and perhaps have the Skoot wind up her lively career by being completely wrecked.

In next week's Ledger will appear another rattling good story of boy adventure, entitled, "Captain Kidd's Treasure; or, The Mystery of Shelter Cove," by Captain Jack Judson. Our boy readers will find this story mighty interesting. Read it, and find out what strange things happened to Dick Spencer and Rodney Sells in searching for Captain Kidd's pirate treasure.

The End.

* * *

CURING A HABIT.

"Have you been affected by the hard times very much?" Mrs. Drake asked her caller.

"I had a letter from a relative in New York today and there wasn't a thing in it but a wailing about hard times. We have not noticed any great difference in our house yet."

"Well, I did," Mrs. Wilkinson declared. "Away back last year after he had had a trip to New York my husband began to talk poor and it was very depressing."

"No more than the fact," Mrs. Drake laughed. "We all would like to have automobiles and trips West, you know."

"It was depressing to economize," said Mrs. Wilkinson. "First of all, we cut out entertaining. My husband thought we were on the verge of a big panic and he said that we had better save our money for a time of trouble. Of course, I was thoroly scared. The word panic is enough to put a woman into nervous prostration, anyhow, especially when a man like my husband speaks so solemnly, as if we shouldn't have five cents to bless ourselves with by the next week."

"Men are like little boys and like to talk big to scare the girls, don't you think?" Mrs. Drake asked in a whisper. "It sounds so important, you know."

"There may be something in that," Mrs. Wilkinson laughed. "At any rate, I was very much worried. I cut down expenses in every way I could all winter. I wore a suit that was two years old and a hat that I had trimmed myself, so you can see how good I was. I stayed good until one very fine evening, when I asked my husband if he was very much worried. He looked up from his paper and said in a surprised tone: 'Worried about what?' and then I began to think.

"I noticed that all the men who came with their wives to call talked about little else than the hard times and the necessity for economy, and I made up my mind that it was just a habit. I thought that probably there had been a little anxiety at first about the way things were going to act, and that men had grown so used to cautioning their wives to be careful that they couldn't stop. They probably were saving a tidy sum and liked the sensation, too."

"A man never realizes how much it takes to run a house," Mrs. Drake sighed. "And they imagine that women spend untold hundreds on their clothes."

"Well, I investigated personally and privately," Mrs. Wilkinson chuckled. "I found that all the apartments we own are occupied and everybody is paying promptly, and then I asked innocent little questions of my brothers-in-law about the business. You see, there are three brothers in the business together and I could ask one thing of one of them and another of his brother, so I finally put all the réplies together and discovered that this has been the best year they ever had had, and the coming year promises to be even better. My husband had remarked to some one that for them the war in Europe was the greatest thing that ever occurred. Then, too, every one of those partners had furnished his office anew in mahogany during the so-called hard times. When I heard that I went right down and bought the most expensive hat I ever possessed."

"I don't blame you in the least."

"I told my husband that as long as the times were so hard I'd better have a hat that would last and be worth the money put into it. He said this was a good idea, but he sighed and added that there was no telling which way the cat would jump. The same evening I overheard him telling the janitor that he expected to retire from business in a couple of years, so the very next day I went down and bought a good suit. It was only a week later that he agreed with a caller that poverty was staring this country in the face, so I went the following day and got the parlor curtains I've wanted for so long. I told my husband that as long as we were going to be so dreadfully poor I'd better get the curtains while we had the money on hand.

"It was nearly a month before we had any more poverty talk, but when the Dunbars called it was as doleful as a funeral. Everything was going to the everlasting something or other, and stocks were either high or low, I don't know which. Anyhow, ruin was all we could look forward to, and it would be here in a few weeks.

"The very next morning I told my husband that I didn't expect to have a vacation again in years, so I was going West at once for a whole month. I went right down the same day and bought my ticket for California. Everybody was surprised at my going, and some didn't know I was gone until I got back last week, but I had a good time anyhow. My husband came on the very next train and surprised me by appearing at my hotel a few hours after I arrived. I asked him what made him come and he said it was economy. He thought it was safer to be with me. I had picked out the most expensive place, and I enjoyed myself."

"Did he?"

"My husband is blessed with a sense of humor," Mrs. Wilkinson chuckled. "I heard him tell a friend that he did not believe in telling women to economize, because they spent very little, anyhow, when you didn't worry them about it, and he could trust his wife. That day I told him I thought we were spending too much and we'd better start for home as soon as we could pack up."

* * *

Hoping for the Best.

"There is no sense in being pessimistic," said Wizun to Whinebom. "Why should you worry about dying? I used to know a man who was continually worrying for fear he would die before his children grew up, and he lived to see every one of them married to a loafer.

"There was another man who was always afraid he would land in the poorhouse. Night and day it troubled him, and he lost a lot of sleep over it. He never went to the poorhouse at all. He went to Sing Sing.

"Once I knew a fellow who was afraid that his sweetheart might jilt him and marry some other guy. Foolish fellow! He had nothing to fear. She didn't jilt him.

"She married him at high noon, had all the bridesmaids and fuss that the law allows, and she presented him with eleven bouncing boys and girls, many of whom were twins.

"Another man was going around looking miserable because he was afraid he would lose his hearing. But he didn't. He was able to hear everything his wife said to him when he came home late, forgetting the stuff she had told him to bring.

"There was a man who had his foot run over. He was crying around everywhere about never being able to walk again, and his wife and all his family were worried about it. But he got plenty of walking to do. He kept his foot to walk the floor with a dozen babies, and besides he went to live in the suburbs where he had to walk nine blocks to the nearest car. Besides that he belonged to the uniform rank of his lodge, and they went in for drill practice every night for two years to compete for a prize. He did plenty of walking before he died.

"Then there was a fellow who came very near committing suicide. He said he would never love another. Yet he has been kicked out of the house by half a dozen pas since that time, chewed by seven or eight dogs, and shot in the neck by a jealous rival.

"Don't be pessimistic, Whinebom! Hope for the best!"

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Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

Published Every Saturday

By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

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Single subscriptions to the Chicago Ledger by mail $1.00 a year, 50 cents for six months, in advance. Remittances should be made by Bank Draft, Registered Letter, Postoffice or Express Money Order, payable to the Chicago Ledger. The address tab on your paper shows the date to which your subscription is paid.

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Lots of infant industries never grow up.

Only fools mortgage their opportunities.

Anything is wrong that is almost right.

Many a spinster is sorry she learned to say "no."

Bitter medicine, like bitter experience, may be the best.

You can blind men by throwing gold dust in their eyes.

A cripple has running expenses the same as other people.

Kissing may be unhealthful, but nothing risked, nothing gained.

Some women are happy because they know how to think they are.

And some of the worst cry-babies are more ~~than 21 years of age~~.

To err is human; to fail to profit by your mistakes is still more so.

A woman's religion should be able to keep the freckles off her reputation.

How easy it is to acquire a bad reputation and how difficult it is to lose it!

If a man is unable to discover his weakness his wife will discover it for him.

Nothing is so fatal to the romance of a stolen kiss as to have the girl sneeze at the wrong time.

A man never fears the wrath of a woman who is fat enough to shake all over when she laughs.

A man does meaner things than he says, and a woman says meaner things than she does.

Never call a big strong man a liar; it is safer to hire some other fellow to break the news to him.

It's easy for a young man to paddle his own canoe—if his father will provide the canoe and paddle.

There is no place like home, but that's no excuse for loafing around there instead of going out and hunting a job.

A Kansas man who was recently hypnotized says it made him feel "just like it does when my wife makes up her mind."

One seldom sees a woman on the street without a shopping bag. That ought to be sufficient warning to any bachelor.

A man always shuts the door when about to be told a secret, but a woman opens it to see whether any one outside is listening.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Velvet handbags are much in demand.

Ribbon is well used on chic afternoon toilettes.

The bright, crude colors have given place to the pastel shades.

On the coating serges a good deal of broad black military braid is to be seen.

Many of the new coats are cut in two sections and joined together at the normal waist line.

There are new crepe de chine blouses made tailored style with tucks, hemstitching, and crochet buttons.

For every day and windy weather there is nothing better than a trim little velvet turban finished with a perky velvet bow.

Shoes are worn as high as the law allows and walking permits and are usually laced. They range from all white and black to light gray, blue, brown, purple, and black. Black velvet and satin shoes are coming into high favor again.

❧

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

Do not throw away your egg shells; they are very useful when cleaning decanters. Crush the egg shells into small bits and shake them well in the decanters when they are three parts filled with water.

Take common beeswax and shave it very thin with a knife dipped in hot water. Cover the wax with turpentine and let it stand twenty-four hours. Do not heat it on the stove, as it will dissolve and make it like a soft paste. Clean your linoleum with warm water and a little soap until it is perfectly clean, then take a woolen cloth.

A curious and effective substitute for fur invented by an American designer is a cloth made of angora yarn crocheted into a fabric such as is often used for babies' caps. In soft gray this makes very effective banding, and the model for which it was first designed, a smoky gray Russian costume of heavy, soft silk, with high collar, cuffs, wide coat band, and several narrow skirt bands, is exceedingly good-looking and original.

❧

WOMAN'S REALM.

Home is the abiding place of woman. In the home all that is characteristically feminine in woman unfolds and flourishes. Home without woman is a misnomer, for woman makes the home, and home is what she makes it. If she is illiterate, her home partakes of this quality; if she is immoral, her home cannot be the abode of virtue; if she is coarse, refinement does not dwell where she resides. If she is cultured, pure, and refined, these qualities will characterize the home which she creates. The higher the degree of her culture, her purity, her refinement, the more will these qualities characterize the home of which she is the center. The personality that a woman takes with her in her marriage is her real dower. If her dower can be reckoned in numerals only, no matter how many they may be, wrecked, indeed, will be her husband, impoverished her children. But if she possess industry, self-abnegation, purity, and intelligence, combined with capability, she is in herself a treasure of treasures.

❧

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING.

Good housekeeping does not always mean home-making, but home-making always means good housekeeping in the best sense of the word. Eternal vigilance must always be the price of good housekeeping, but a continual round of drudgery need not prevail if the work is planned systematically, and performed intelligently. Good housekeeping means health, happiness, and comfort to the entire household, while poor housekeeping means discomfort, discord, and unhappiness. It is not going too far to say that the kitchen is the keynote of the household, and upon the kitchen range must be offered up incense to the little god of domestic felicity.

Even if a housewife is not obliged to do the work with her own hands, it is essential that she should know exactly how it should be done; then if she is fortunate enough to have competent help, she will appreciate the service rendered, and a desired consummation is reached when there is mutual confidence and respect between mistress and maid. But if the mistress is as incompetent as the maid, how can she ever hope to train to skillful service that embodiment of ignorance and inefficiency which often finds a place in our kitchens?

The woman who hopes to be able to attain efficiency in housekeeping must comprehend the laws of sanitation and appreciate the importance of cleanliness. She must understand the nutritive value of different kinds of food, and be able to furnish her family with well-selected and healthful viands.

❧

MODELING A MAN.

It takes a woman to make a man famous—or infamous.

Cato Major said: "We who rule men are ruled by women."

Woman is the sculptress and arbiter of the race. In her hands lie the destinies of men and of peoples.

Mankind is as clay in woman's hands, as melting wax in the sunshine of her smiles.

Let her mold her figure on lines of eternal truth and beauty—not on lines of self.

The clay can speak no more than its modeler sees. Woman must herself glimpse the Great Self before she can shape a man of Great Selfhood.

Women who have not found themselves turn men thru a common mold and then get desperately tired of their own machine-made products.

Great men are molded by great women only. If women are great, man cannot be small.

Sins of omission are as great as those of commission. For centuries millions of women ceased to mold, but sat complacently by and watched men shape their grotesque figures—usually applauding.

Man's world and the figures he had shaped are crumbling into dust. They were not molded on lines of permanent truth and beauty. They lacked creative centers.

A finished love pat from a woman has overturned many a man's creation—knocked it clean off its pedestal.

If women would model men of Great Self they must be women of the Great Self. That Self must exist in them—a living pattern from which to work.

The strange thing about modeling men is that women need not manipulate or fashion her clay at all—simply BE herself, and even the crudest, most irregular figures of themselves will take on lines of beauty and truth.

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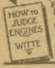

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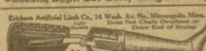
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There was never a queen like Balkis,
  From here to the wide world's end;
But Balkis talked to a butterfly
  As you would talk to a friend.

There was never a king like Solomon,
  Not since the world began;
But Solomon talked to a butterfly
  As a man would talk to a man.

She was queen of Sabaea—
  And he was Asia's lord—
But they both of 'em talked to butterflies
  When they took their walks abroad.
      —Rudyard Kipling.

A WILD RIDE.

Willis, the son of Mr. Boker, the station agent, had got a new bobsled for his birthday, and he was eager to try it. So on a certain Saturday he gathered together a few boon comrades, who were glad of a ride or two, and tried all the hills in town in succession. At length, only Forest street remained unconquered, and thither Willis and company bent their steps. The "Meteor" as the bobsled was called, proved so fast that the longest hills seemed too short to its owner. Forest hill, however, could be coasted for a half-mile—that is, from the last turn by the Bell house clear down to the railroad tracks, where the station stood.

The hill was crowded with merry coasters when Willis started up. He knew that above the bend the road continued to ascend the mountainside for two more miles; and it was suggested to him on the way up that no one had ever yet dared to coast the whole distance.

"Boys," cried Willis, eagerly, "I dare!"

There was a shout of derision.

"Yes, I think I'll try it; who'll go with me?" he cried, defiantly. "Volunteers wanted to ride the Meteor from the top of the mountain."

At first the boys shied, but presently Willis had chosen three other boys to ride with him, and, after cautioning the coasters to watch out for him, departed for the top, two miles away.

"Ooh," cried a little girl, when they had gone, "it will go so fast we shan't see it at all."

"Yep," said another, with vague notions of speed, "it will go five miles a second."

The boys trudged silently up, up, up, until at last they came out on a level space—the top of the hill. Willis put Fenn Broker at the brakes in the rear, took the wheel himself and the Meteor was ready for its last performance. The coasters had cleared the road and posted a boy at the railroad crossing to warn sleighs, carriages, and grocery wagons of the meteoric danger; so Willis felt quite safe as the Meteor dropped gently over the crest.

"We're off," he cried. "If any one wants to quit he'd better tumble off now."

No one did; and the swift Meteor, true to its name, began to gather way at once. The first turn was passed on the inside in good style, and the snow began to whirl into their eyes in earnest. But the deep snow up on the mountain had drifted into the road, preventing high speed. At the second turn the Meteor swung dangerously near the bank; and now the road became smoother. The boys saw the trees merely as long blurred shadowy things; the speed was increasing with each yard, and now the rider could see the last turn at the Bell house, with a crowd of delighted coasters on the banks. Willis felt that the worst was over and called for brakes, but the bobsled did not slow up at all. It was hard to steer it now, and as the Meteor shot by the Bell house it ran far up on the bank, nearly going over a fifteen-foot wall. The boys merely saw two lines of black as they whizzed thru the cheering crowd and made the turn.

The Meteor took the last stretch with a bound that nearly left Fenn behind. He applied the brakes, there was a slight jerk and the gear broke—with a straight run of a half-mile to the bottom, before them, and the Meteor going so fast that its riders had to cling on desperately. Willis did not know it, but they were at that moment going faster—much faster than the limited express that passed thru the town daily at noon. It was no fun now—only a terrible suspense with the certain outlook of a terrible crash against the station wall at the end.

Willis felt queer. He could now see nothing except straight black-and-white lines, like ruled pencil lines, rushing upward between the front runners. Once for a brief second he lost control of the wheel, and in that second the Meteor crossed the road, tore up on the bank, swerved and returned to its path; every boy on it was as white as paper. Willis felt responsible, and he saw, too, that the boy placed at the hill bottom was dancing about wildly. The last few yards of road slipped away as if jerked from under, and at that instant a horse and sleigh turned into Forest street. It was all over in a flash of red and white. The Meteor, going faster than the man in the sleigh had ever seen anything go before, whirled out of a cloud of snow dust, struck the sleigh sideways, passed under the horse and hurled itself, empty, against the station wall, where it was dashed into a hundred pieces.

The great ride was over, and four plucky, foolish boys lay here and there in the snow. By a miracle, there was little damage done, except to the Meteor itself. Mr. Boker picked up his son and his comrades and discovered thirty or forty bruises, some bad cuts and a broken bone. Willis had broken his arm in two places, but it soon knitted. Since that time no one has coasted down Forest street, and a large sign on a tree there reads:

NOTICE:
COASTING FORBIDDEN ON THIS HILL AS IT IS DANGEROUS. A FINE OF $5 FOR EVERY VIOLATION OF THIS RULE. REMEMBER THE "METEOR," BOYS.

To do a daring act simply because it is bold is not real bravery; when death is risked merely for sport, bravery becomes foolhardiness.

SOAP BUBBLE RACES.

Soap bubble races are great fun and exciting up to the last moment, for one may be within an inch of the goal and lose by having his soap bubble burst.

The contestants should start evenly at one end of the room, while at the other end is the winning line, which probably can be represented by a seam in the carpet.

Each player is provided with a fan, preferably the one stick kind, which will not open or shut. At a given signal each player starts to blow his bubble, and then shaking it to the floor, fans it toward the winning line. If it bursts before any bubble has crossed the line, he may go back and start again. The first player across is the winner. To make the game more difficult the bubble may be required to pass between two upright posts, instead of merely crossing the line, or it may be played like football, with goals at each end. In this case some one halfway between must blow a bubble while the players fan it in opposite directions.

Soap bubble football would not be condemned by the most civilized of colleges.

WRONG GUESS.

Teacher—"Who can tell me what useful article we get from the whale?"

Johnny—"Whalebone."

Teacher—"Right. Now, what little boy or girl knows what we get from the seal?"

Tommy—"Sealing wax."

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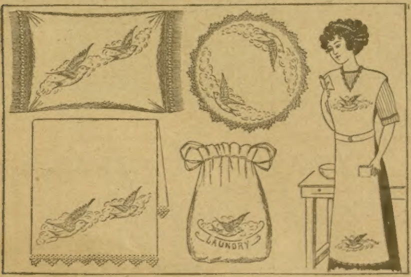

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Bluebird subjects are entirely different from set flowers, fruits, and conventional designs, which have been used in the past few seasons. They are takin precedence over all other designs for their popularity. Every one of the article shown above, even to the Fudge Apron, showing the two birds, is tinted in artisti and beautiful shades of blue, and the lines to be worked are in black.

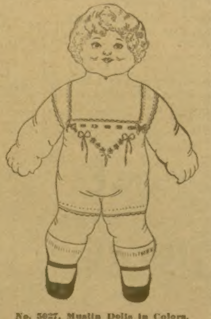
THE LAUNDRY BAG DESIGN is tinted on oatmeal cloth, sixe 17x25 inches. Included with each are six skeins of colored floss for working. Will be sent for $2.00 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to either the Blade or Ledger.

THE PILLOW TOP DESIGN is tinted on oatmeal cloth, size 17x21 inches. Included with each are a back and six skeins of floss for working. Will be sent for $1.50 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to either the Blade or the Ledger.

THE CENTERPIECE DESIGN is tinted on oatmeal cloth, size 25 x25 inches. Included with each are six skeins of floss for working. Will be sent for $1.50 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to eithe the Blade or Ledger.

THE SCARF DESIGN is tinted on oat meal cloth, size 17x50 inches. Include with each are six skeins of floss fo working. The scarf will be forwarde to any one sending $2.00 in subscription new or renewal, to either the Blade o the Ledger.

THE FUDGE APRON DESIGN is tinte on white art cloth. Regular ¾ lengt slip-over style. Included with each are four skeins of floss for working. The apron will be sent without cost for a year's subscription, new or renewal, at $1.00, to either the Blade or the Ledger.



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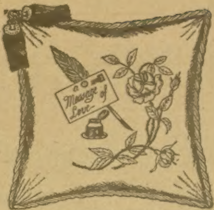

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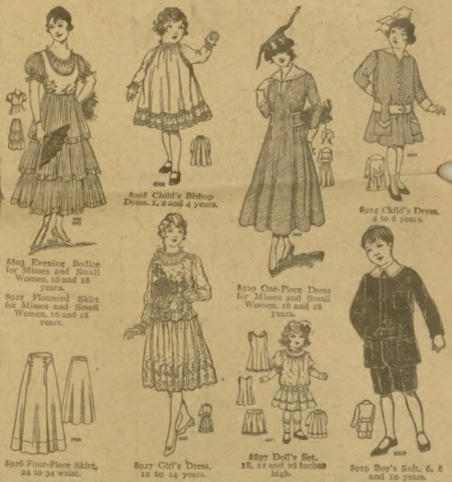

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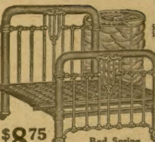

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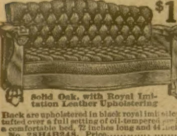

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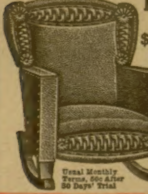

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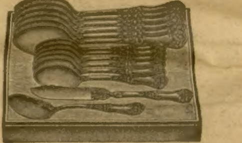

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